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MOLTKE IN HIS HOME

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Field-Marshal Count von Moltke.

[*Frontispiece.*

MOLTKE IN HIS HOME

BY FRIEDRICH AUGUST DRESSLER

AUTHORISED TRANSLATION BY
MRS CHARLES EDWARD BARRETT-LENNARD

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
GENERAL LORD METHUEN, G.C.B., K.C.V.O., C.M.G.

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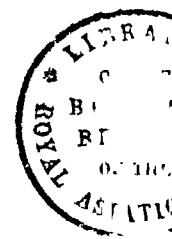

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
1907

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PREFACE

"ERST wägen, dann wagen."[1] This favourite expression of the great Field-Marshal is deeply imprinted on my memory, as is all that I ever heard him utter.

I have hesitated a long time before making up my mind to publish my reminiscences of that great man, but the unbounded gratitude I have always cherished towards him, and the strong desire I feel for others to know and love him as I knew and loved him, have conquered all other considerations.

I shall have no heroic deeds to recount. These are well known to the world. I shall only attempt to enlarge the picture by adding some little traits of daily life. But the "little occupations of the day extend into hours, weeks, months, and in the end make up life with all

[1] First weigh, then go forward.

its joys and sorrows," wrote Moltke himself to his *fiancée*. This gives me courage to send forth these pages.

May my reminiscences be received in the spirit in which they were written.

INTRODUCTION

I HAVE been asked to write a few lines as a preface to this modest and interesting account of the home life of Marshal Moltke, by Friedrich August Dressler.

I find myself amongst old friends, for from Dressler I used to have lessons on the violin, and soon after my arrival in Berlin I formed a friendship with the Marshal's nephew, Herr von Burt, which lasted during the three years I remained in Germany as military attaché.

It was through this friendship I became acquainted with the Marshal, for he kept much to himself, and cared to know but few foreigners.

The home life is charmingly depicted by Dressler, and helps one to realise the Marshal's simplicity, and exceptionally refined character. He seemed a perfect contrast to the other great creator of the German Empire, Bismarck. The

latter concentrated all power and statecraft in himself, so when his fall came his mantle fell on no one, whereas the Marshal's one idea was so to imbue the General Staff with his views, that when he died there should be no difficulty in carrying on the work of the General Staff.

He had that singular charm of manner which we associate with the term of a high-bred English gentleman. To soldiers he set the example of how to work through and for others, not to play for our own hand, and not to seek to enhance our own interest by means of self-advertisement.

It was these traits of character that made all who had the privilege of knowing this great soldier love and respect him, and to many like myself this short description of his inner life will be very welcome.

METHUEN.

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The Author and Publisher desire to express their acknowledgments of the courteous assistance of Messrs Fontane & Co., of Berlin, in connection with these Illustrations.

MOLTKE IN HIS HOME

I

MY FIRST VISIT

I MADE the acquaintance of Herr von Burt in 1869, at the house of Herr von Vignau, the director of the Court Theatre in Weimar. Frau von Vignau is a daughter of Eduard Mandel, the celebrated steel engraver. She is a remarkably fine violinist.

Soon after this, Herr von Burt began to take singing lessons from me, and this led to my first connection with the Field-Marshal's family.

His personal acquaintance I made two years later, a few months after his triumphal return from France. He had taken up his residence at the General Staff Department. His widowed sister, Frau von Burt, had been living with him since the death of his wife. Her son

introduced me to her, and she presented me to the Field-Marshal, whom I saw face to face for the first time on October 15, 1871. It was at an evening party given in honour of one of his younger brothers, Herr Ludwig von Moltke, from Ratzeburg. He was an admirable violinist, and having retired from official life on account of his health, he had quite given himself up to his musical tastes.

The duty of opening the entertainment devolved upon me, and I did so by playing some mazurkas of my own composition. My feelings can be imagined when I perceived that all eyes were turned towards the Geheimrat von Moltke, who was himself an enthusiastic composer, and whom the Field-Marshal regarded as a sort of musical pope. Under those circumstances it was a very momentous occasion for me, and happily ended well, for I had hardly stopped playing before Herr Ludwig von Moltke came and pressed my hand appreciatively. This decided my future.

More music followed, too much for my youthful nerves. I played a violin sonata of Mozart's with Herr Ludwig von Moltke, then a Fantasie of Schubert's, and some of Beethoven's sonatas, and several of Bach's shorter

pieces, as well as a few of Händel's and Tartini's. After several hours of incessant playing I nearly fell from my seat with fatigue, but I could not let this be seen, so I pulled myself together as well as I could. But who can describe my feelings when I beheld a servant bring a whole pile of music into the room by the Geheimrat's orders, for the principal pieces were still to come. I found with alarm that he had lost all idea of the hour in his enthusiasm for art. A true disciple of Spohr's, he had no thought of leaving his violin.

What was to become of me? The notes swam before my eyes, and I could scarcely master my feelings. I was afraid of not finding the pedal. Suddenly I heard a kind voice behind me saying:

"You are trying to do too much. Say so frankly. When my brother begins to play, he cannot leave off."

In the kindness of his heart the Field-Marshal had noticed my embarrassment, and by a glance he suggested to his sister that it was time for tea.

Lieutenant von Burt surprised and delighted me the next day by telling me that I had

had the good fortune to please the Field-Marshal, and a few days later I received the following invitation :—

BERLIN, *October* 20, 1871.

DEAR HERR DRESSLER,

My mother and the Field-Marshal hope you will dine with us *en famille* next Wednesday, at four o'clock. Bring your violin and play us something really beautiful, such as Beethoven's G Major Romance, or Spohr's Barcarolee, or something of that sort.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

v. BURT.

Please answer.

Shortly after this I was always invited by Frau von Burt to stay and dine after her son's singing lesson was over.

Thus I was brought into intimate relations with the family in which I have enjoyed so many delightful hours, although I could not then have formed any idea of how much the Field-Marshal would become to me.

II

THE MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY

Field-Marshal Count von Moltke was the third child in a family of eight, six brothers and two sisters. He cherished a tender affection for his relations all his life. He followed the career of each one of them with warm sympathy, and proved it by the active correspondence he carried on with them from early youth to old age. His heart clung especially to his brother Adolf, somewhat his junior, who resembled him in many ways.

This brother was in the Danish service at first, and finally he was Landrat of the district of Pinneberg, in Holstein. He suffered for years from a disease of the lungs which caused the Field-Marshal great anxiety.

Of the Field-Marshal's great kindness and self-denial one can judge from the following little incident:—

"Dear Helmuth," asked his wife one day, "why do you not drink any more wine at dinner?"

"If I save on the wine bill, I shall be able to send Adolf to the baths for his health, you see."

The Landrat died shortly before the end of the Franco-German war. He was the only one of his brothers who had sons, and the Field-Marshal then took the place of a father to them.

His future plans for the children, however, he kept to himself. Besides the four sons, the Landrat left two daughters, the elder of whom married Herr von Kulmiz, a landowner in Silesia. He gave his brother's wife, after her husband's death, a little house in the neighbourhood of Creisau. We shall meet her again there.

His second brother, Fritz, spent his latter years in the Field-Marshal's home. He was a Danish officer in his youth, and afterwards became postmaster at Flensburg. After his wife's death, his sister, Frau von Burt, went to live with him, and later on he went with her to live with the Field-Marshal.

Those who had, like myself, the opportunity

of observing his patience and consideration for this suffering brother, and how he tended him, can form some idea of his great hospitality. He never sat down to meals till his brother was there, he never helped himself before him, and he always poured out his wine first, and would listen with marked attention whenever he spoke, although his own thoughts might be engaged elsewhere. He sympathised with untiring devotion in his sufferings, which were especially painful either on sitting down or getting up.

Like all the Moltkes, Uncle Fritz, as he was called, was very musical. If he was unable to be with us when we played, the door always had to be left open so that he might hear us from the rather distant room where he sat smoking in his great armchair. He was amiable and patient, and never let fall a word about his great sufferings.

I remember his telling an amusing incident which had happened to him. He was short, certainly a head shorter than his celebrated brother, and he was so remarkably like Richard Wagner that he was once stopped in the street by a Wagner enthusiast with these impulsive words :—

"Master, what good luck to meet you here in Berlin."

The Field-Marshal was highly amused at this mistake. His brother taken for Wagner! —Wagner of all people, for whom he cared so little.

Frau von Moltke (whom, unfortunately, I never knew) died in 1868, a year before I became acquainted with Herr von Burt. Her sweet memory always pervaded the house, and I have frequently heard the Field-Marshal speak of her in a manner that showed how sacred the memory of his noble wife was to him. He had lived in the greatest happiness with her for twenty-five years. It was, perhaps, his reverence for her that gave him such an admiration for great female characters.

He liked to talk about Queen Luise, and once when speaking of her to me he said: "Poland produced a noble-hearted Queen who remonstrated with her husband on the oppression of the peasants. He surprised her afterwards by announcing that he had given them back their rights." "And their tears?" asked the Queen.

He had a great interest in Queen Mary Stuart, and he particularly admired the portraits

he saw of her when travelling in England; and, judging from her face, he thought that history had wronged her. She was an unfortunate woman in his opinion, who had suffered terribly for the faults of her youth, and he agreed with Schiller's treatment of her.

The Field-Marshal's wife, Marie von Moltke, was the second daughter of an English gentleman, a Mr Burt, whose second wife was Moltke's favourite sister, Auguste. He died in 1856, and left one son and two daughters by his first marriage, and two children by his second wife, a daughter, Ernestine, and a son, the Henry von Burt already mentioned.

The Field-Marshal liked his sister's step-daughters, especially the younger one, Marie, because of her beauty and sympathetic nature.

She had developed into very great beauty during his stay in Turkey, and on his return he fell in love with her, and opened his heart to his sister. To his great joy, he heard from her that Maria had long felt a warm affection for him. He proposed and was accepted, although she, in her humility, felt doubtful as to her fitness to become his wife.

"Dear Helmuth," she asked, "what shall I do to please you?"

"Remain just as you are," he replied, "and I am sure that you will become the dearest of little wives. But I find many things in myself which I do not like."

No less characteristic of the charming relations between them is a letter to his betrothed, which has hitherto never been published:—

"Your letter of the 28th, dear Marie, has just arrived from Glückstadt. I am glad that you will keep your promise soon, for you have much to tell me about the ball—how pretty you looked; who, besides yourself, was the *lion*[1] of the party; if *the gentleman with the narrow boots*[1] was there, who paid you attention; what dance you liked best; and all the other bits of news. It was a good thing you stayed at Adolf's, and only returned to Itzehoe in the morning. I did not think that there were eighty persons in the whole of Glückstadt.

"I am very much surprised at uncle Henry's sudden return. I shall make you responsible for keeping him till Christmas, so that I may have the pleasure of making his acquaintance. I am delighted to hear that grandpapa is so lively and well. Riekchen Ballhorn has not been well for a long time, but she wrote a few days ago, and mama will already have had a letter. It is

[1] These words are written in English.

certainly the best plan to buy as much as possible here.

"Now adieu, sweet little soul,

"Most affectionately,

"HELMUTH."

These affectionate relations lasted during the whole of their married life, and his love for her was constant till his last breath. He often told his niece, Frau Helmuth von Moltke, that he wished to be buried with his wedding ring on his hand. She always had to promise him, but she would have been faithful to his wishes in any case.

The only shadow in this happy marriage was its childlessness.

Both the Field-Marshal and his wife loved children so much that they had Henry von Burt live with them for several years.

Marie von Moltke died suddenly from the effects of a chill which she took when out riding with her husband. She died on Christmas Eve, and for this reason Christmas was a sad anniversary for the Field-Marshal:—

"The Lord took Marie to Himself on Christmas Eve, and henceforth it was a day of sad remembrance for me."

He bore his loss with characteristic resignation. "God has determined upon other things for me, and He does what is best. He has taken her in the fulness of life and strength and beauty to Himself, and she has been spared all the bitternesses of life."

He built a mausoleum on the top of a hill at Criesau, in which he now rests by her side. Every time he went to the country his first walk was to her resting-place, and he gathered flowers on the way to place on her coffin. He never missed a day when at Criesau, without going there, and even in his old age he was never deterred by the worst weather. The fir wood on the hill was planted by him to beautify the place. When I had the honour of being his guest for a few weeks, he took me to that sanctuary the first day after my arrival.

His sister, Frau von Burt, "dear Guste," as Moltke generally called her, nursed her step-daughter throughout her illness, and her brother never forgot her devotion. "Such things cannot be repaid, except by gratitude and love," he writes to her the day after she went away, "but sorrow must first soften the hard hearts of men in order to draw them together."

Queen Auguste sent for Frau von Burt, and

said she thought that so far as she understood the General, he would endeavour to retire from public life now that he had lost his wife, and that she owed it to her King and Fatherland to take care of his household; and it was thus owing to the Queen's suggestion that Frau von Burt went to live with her brother.

Henry von Burt was a lieutenant in the army, and King Wilhelm, knowing that he had spent several years of his childhood in his uncle's house, and that he was very dear to him, appointed him Moltke's adjutant. Long before this time, however, Moltke had repeatedly expressed his desire to retire from the service. In 1868 he alludes to it in a letter to his brother Adolf, saying, that as he was not likely to attain higher rank than that of Chief of the General Staff of an Army Corps, he intended to retire when he obtained that rank:—

"I must say that I do not possess the talent to accomplish more than I have done so far, and the thought of giving up my work recurs to me constantly."

Nor did he relinquish this idea later on, so that it was but natural for him to be strengthened in it by the great sorrow of his wife's death. But Frau von Burt understood exactly how to

comfort her brother, and for fourteen years she made his home a very happy one. She and her son Henry undoubtedly were largely instrumental in preventing him from carrying out his wish.

Kaiser Wilhelm writes to him in 1871 :—

"Now at the close of the year which has brought us the blessing of peace, I cannot omit to express my deep gratitude to you whose hand guided the well-sharpened sword, and raised the nation and army to an undreamed-of height. I take advantage of this Christmas season to tell you this, and I shall never cease to praise Providence for having placed you at my side to fight for this great and glorious end.

"Your grateful King,

"WILHELM."

Frau von Burt resembled the Field-Marshal in character though not in looks. She made every one happy who approached her. Notwithstanding the great comfort which surrounded her in the official residence, she retained her simple habits, and in spite of her intercourse with the great world, she remained faithful to her affectionate interest in others, and never lost faith in them. She was an enthusiastic lover of art, and a wonderfully good performer on the

piano. When at cards with her brother, her thoughts were constantly with us as we played in the adjoining room. The Field-Marshal used to make allowance for her for a while, then he would arrange his cards, or gently tap the edge of the table, and at last say, as he slowly shook the ashes from his cigar:—

"It is a beautiful air, is it Mozart's, Guste?"

This hint would recall her to the game.

In her care of the Field-Marshal, Frau von Burt had the devoted assistance of her son, who, sacrificing his own interests and individuality to his uncle, dedicated the best years of his life to him.

He was one of the most gifted, amiable, and intellectual of the immediate circle surrounding the Field-Marshal, who loved his frank, happy nature, which reminded him of his wife's. Henry von Burt had a remarkably high baritone voice which spoke directly to the innermost heart, for he had, so to speak, "tears in his voice." No celebrity, no Stockhausen nor Betz, could give his uncle the same pleasure, and even during the war in France he never lost an opportunity of hearing him sing. As a reader, Herr von Burt gave his uncle many pleasant hours, for he was as much at home in English literature as in

German. The Field-Marshal particularly enjoyed his reading of both Reuter and Dickens.

It fell to Herr von Burt to settle all family affairs and to keep the accounts, thus taking upon himself all his uncle's domestic cares.

"Henry manages my money and keeps me in order," Molkte once wrote to his sister Magdalene.

To these members of the family were added now and then one or other of the "four giants," as their uncle jokingly called his brother Adolf's sons. He greatly enjoyed having them march before him, though, as a rule, they came separately, just as military duties or holidays brought them to Berlin. After Frau von Burt's death and Henry's retirement, the second nephew, Helmuth von Moltke, and his charming wife went to live with the Field-Marshal.

Herr Wilhelm von Moltke, the eldest of the nephews, and the one who succeeded his uncle in his title and estate, was the one with whom I became acquainted first. He was called "the dwarf," because, in spite of his unusual height, he was shorter than the others. He was in the Garde du Corps, and was then at the Staff College, and lived with his uncle. He took violin lessons from me. His superb appearance,

COLONEL HENRY VON BURT, MOLTKE'S NEPHEW AND ADJUTANT.

GENERAL HELMUTH VON MOLTKE, THE FIELD-MARSHAL'S NEPHEW.

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and his pleasant, frank, soldierly bearing made him a delightful personality, and with his musical talent and cultured taste it was a pleasure to instruct him.

Shortly after this I met Herr Helmuth von Moltke, he was in the foot-guards at Potsdam, and often came in to dine with his uncle. He resembled the Field-Marshal more than the other nephews, and he was a man of many-sided gifts, possessing an æsthetic taste and keen powers of observation. He was a good writer, and could draw admirably, and he was also a very fine performer on the violoncello. He was considered a promising officer, and he was, as I said, Herr von Burt's successor.

The third nephew, Herr Fritz von Moltke, only made a longer stay in Berlin after the two elder ones were married, in order to prepare for his profession. He was a lawyer. I had heard from his godfather, his uncle Fritz, what a good man he was, before I met him. He always called him his "Fritz with the golden heart."[1] He, too, was musical, though his profession, unfortunately, allowed him little spare time to cultivate his fine bass voice. But he did more lasting good for the art. As Professor Joachim

[1] Now Oberpräsident of East Prussia.

has said, the Royal School of Music in Berlin owes more to him than to any other person, and its handsome building may well rank with the Conservatoire in Paris and the Clothworkers' Hall in Leipzig.

The youngest brother, Herr Ludwig von Moltke, also spent his holidays at his uncle's house. He preferred agricultural pursuits, and had undertaken the management of the Creisau estate.

The Field-Marshal towered above the family like a patriarch, loved and honoured by them all, though he maintained a certain aloofness notwithstanding his kind heart, and no one ever ventured to intrude. Even for Henry von Burt, who as nephew and brother-in-law and adjutant enjoyed a quite exceptional confidence, there was a limit which he never ventured to pass.

The most important affairs which the Field-Marshal had under consideration, perhaps for days, he never mentioned to his family till the last moment. The following characteristic little incident has already been published in *The Collected Writings and Memorials*:—

He was taking a drive with his brother Adolf and his sister-in-law and their two daughters on July 15, 1870, when a telegram was handed to

him, which he read and put into his pocket. They returned home an hour afterwards, when he said as he entered the drawing-room: "It is tiresome, but I must go to Berlin to-night." Then he went to his study and appeared as usual at tea. No one had an idea what was impending, when he suddenly rose and, laying his hand on the table, exclaimed :—

"Let them come; we are prepared, with or without South Germany;" and it was not till later that his family heard about the intended mobilisation against France.

There was the same reticence about trifling incidents. The family never knew about an impending journey till the last moment, which sometimes caused them some inconvenience. But it was also the same concerning his pleasant little surprises. He designed giving me his likeness, a distinction conferred upon few, for in his great modesty he disliked giving away his own likeness. I had seen a good one of him, but had no idea as to his intentions when I asked him :—

"Has your Excellency noticed that nice little bust of yourself?"

"Which one?" he inquired with a smile, the meaning of which was clear to me afterwards.

"The one in the silver room," I replied, and went and fetched it. He took it from me and looked at it for a moment, and then at me, and asked:

"What do you think of it?"

"It is the best one of you I have yet seen?"

"Keep it," he answered, handing it back to me.

I was so much surprised and delighted that I did not know at first what to say. Then I thanked him in a few words, which was what he preferred, and hastened to Frau von Burt with my valuable treasure.

"You may well be proud of it," she said, sympathising with my pleasure; and I have been proud of it ever since.

I expressed my pride in it by playing three of Beethoven's sonatas that evening. I do not know whether or not my gratitude was properly expressed, but I played from the joy of my heart.

III

THE HOUSE

THE private residence of the Chief of the General Staff was in Moltke's time, as it is still, on the first floor of the south-east wing of the General Staff Department, on the corner of Königsplatz and Moltkestrasse. The entrance was on Königsplatz. How often have I entered that portal oppressed with the cares of the day, and left it refreshed, strengthened, and cheered by the presence of that noble man.

I should like here to mention that no sentinel stood before the door at first, which surprised people, and it was only after an attempt to break into the house that one was placed there.

The door led up to a landing by white marble steps, and there another door opened into the Field-Marshal's study. It was immediately over the vestibule, and opened on to a

large balcony on Königsplatz. This door was mostly used only by himself.

A long corridor on the right of the landing led to the working rooms of the General Staff, while one on the left opened directly into the Field-Marshal's private rooms.

Next came a long reception room, the window of which overlooked the courtyard. Close by on the right, towards Königsplatz, were a long series of rooms chiefly used by the Field-Marshal. His bedroom was on the right of his study, and on the left was an ante-room, an extensive conference hall, the silver room, the tea-room, and lastly the music-room, which was at the corner of the two fronts of the house. The rooms on the side of Moltkestrasse were, a little smoking-room, a large dining-room, and further on a set of rooms for the family and household.

This residence was not only too richly furnished for the simple tastes of the Field-Marshal, but it was also far too large. Various rooms were not used—at least, not while Frau von Burt was there—for they were not according to his practical mind. "All that one does not need is too dear to pay for," he once said to me.

This was the case, for instance, with the conference hall, a huge room with a long table in the middle, and very stately armchairs. It was used only once a year, that is on Christmas Eve, when the presents were given. The next room fared no better, with its tapestry and silver-trimmed furniture, and for this reason called the silver room, and which only remains in my memory as a room in which we never had tea except on the evening of the Field-Marshal's death.

And I seldom saw the charming little smoking-room used. It was furnished in Oriental style with unusually costly materials, and owed its origin to the attention of Kaiser Wilhelm I., who thought to remind the Field-Marshal of his stay in Turkey.

The Field-Marshal liked Turkey carpets. In a hitherto unpublished letter to his *fiancée*, he writes on December 2, 1841 :—

"I will not write about the violin to-day, dear Marie, for I am sending you a list of Oriental carpets, which are to be got in London for the corresponding amount in pounds. This in case your papa in an access of generosity should bethink himself of ordering one for you. But I have given my word of honour to return

the list to Privy Councillor Beuth, who trusted me with it on that condition. Pray take care that it is not lost. Such a carpet is a real treasure, and lasts for ever. An Oriental carpet is to a house what an Indian shawl is to dress."

In the dining-room next to the smoking-room the family met regularly at meal-time, and the music-room was also used every day. My most delightful recollections of Moltke's house are associated with that room. I can see it before me now, with its curious five corners, which caused it to be said that the architect had designed it in five-four time. And I can recall the graceful decorations of musical emblems in the panels of the doors, with Moltke's arms and initials over them.

It was furnished in the rococo style, entirely in white and gold; the comfortable half-circular sofas, with tables before them, stood against the walls, and between them were two music stands. A *jardinière* stood in front of the large corner window which looked out on to the square with the Column of Victory, and it was by the particular desire of the Field-Marshal that it was always filled with growing plants. A magnificent Bechstein piano occupied the middle of the

room, and was greatly prized by the Field-Marshal. When the plan for furnishing the room was laid before him, he struck out the large and costly mirror, and desired to have this instrument instead of it. His request was fulfilled, but the mirror was also placed in the room. He scarcely passed a day in that house without listening to this piano, and he regretted that he could not take it with him to Creisau in the summer. If Bechstein had but known that, how delighted he would have been to send a twin brother to our white friend, the Stradivarius piano, as we called it, to Creisau.

The Field-Marshal spent the greater part of the day in his office, where he transacted all of his official business. It was a stately room with three large windows, and a balcony extending almost the breadth of the room, which he often used. He would walk slowly to and fro, but not near the railings, lest he should be seen. The furniture was in the old German style, solid and comfortable. Above the large oak book-cases the walls were covered with fresco battle scenes. A broad, tiled stove containing the hot-water apparatus for heating the room occupied one corner, and in another, near the bedroom, was an open fireplace where beechwood logs

burned, and the Field-Marshal liked to sit before it, lost in thought, as he gazed at the flames.

The numerous complimentary presents, souvenirs and books were kept in this room, the technical library being a valuable one. There was also a set of maps, and in one of the bookcases the Field-Marshal's Orders were arranged, a collection in which, of course, there was hardly anything wanting to make it complete.

Large writing-tables were in front of each window under hanging lamps, and they were used in turn, whether on account of the sun or for different sorts of work, I do not know.

In striking contrast to the richness of the other rooms was the simplicity of the little bedroom. A camp bed, washing-stand, sofa with a table before it, two armchairs and a table by the bed, completed the furniture. There was only one thin blanket on the bed, and it was not until his last years that he was persuaded to have warmer bed-covering. The walls were painted a light colour, but were without any decorations.

His wife's portrait hung above the sofa, and a Bible lay on the table, and he read in it every evening before going to sleep. It had belonged to his mother.

THE GENERAL STAFF DEPARTMENT, BERLIN.

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MOLTKE IN EARLY LIFE.

MARIE VON MOLTKE, WIFE OF THE FIELD-MARSHAL.

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IV.

MOLTKE AT HOME.

THE Field-Marshal was an early riser. It was not till a few years before his death that he took to getting up at half-past seven.

His breakfast usually consisted of a cup of tea and a roll, which was brought to him after he had had half an hour's walk through the suite of rooms, wearing his dressing-gown, and a little black cap on his bald head. He walked with folded arms from his bedroom to the music-room.

He dressed directly after his early breakfast. He did not require shaving, having lost the hair not only from his head but also from his face. When he was colonel he wore a beard, though this is not generally known, and there is a portrait of him extant taken at that time. For health's sake he wore a peruke, but it was not becoming. The most characteristic portrait of him is one in which he is sitting in his armchair without his wig, and which he consented to sit for most reluctantly, for it was trying to him to

appear without any head-covering, and it required all his niece's persuasive powers and Herr Lenbach's[1] urgent entreaty to induce him to sit for that portrait. He was never seen outside of his bedroom without his peruke, and in all the twenty years, I only once saw him wearing his black cap instead of his wig.

He put on his military coat before he left his bedroom, and he wore it all day, except when commanded by his Majesty to appear in full dress. He always wore a faultlessly fresh white waistcoat under his uniform, although he kept his coat buttoned, and used snuff. His large silk handkerchief reminded one of Frederick the Great; though he never carried his snuff loose in his pocket after the manner of that king, but in a little plain silver box. This he was accustomed to put down on the table before him, and one evening he did so as usual while playing whist with our present Kaiser. The latter was always glad to show the Field-Marshal little attentions, and he took occasion afterwards to send him a handsome gold snuff-box. This was carried in his later years, but he thought it stretched his waistcoat pocket.

[1] Franz Lenbach, the celebrated portrait painter, born in Bavaria 1836, died 1904.—Tr.

The Field-Marshal considered it a bore to have to change his linen during the day, for he put it on fresh every morning. I remember he had an engagement after a busy day in the park at Creisau, and his niece begged him to put on a fresh shirt.

"What do you mean?" he replied, and disappeared.

After we were in the carriage he gave his niece a roguish look, and proudly pointed to his shirt. She expressed her pleasure at his compliance, upon which he was silent for a while and then said :—

"Look here, you haven't noticed it a bit. The brush did it." He had rubbed the spots off with a brush.

He went to his study as soon as he was dressed, and began his day's work. His lunch was carried in to him at mid-day, a simple repast, generally consisting of a dish of meat and a glass of white wine. The dinner hour was changed from three to five o'clock, and before dinner he used to take a walk in some quiet part of the Tiergarten, and he never liked to miss his walk, for it was both a pleasure and a necessity to him.

He used to drive there, and then walk about

for a while, even after a more than usually busy day with the Kaiser, or after the Reichstag. He was very fond of driving, and he did so nearly every day after dinner, with the ladies, when in Berlin.

I also have had the honour of accompanying him and Herr von Burt. Once after driving in the Tiergarten we drove on to Charlottenburg, past the Flora, towards the castle. He was very talkative, and spoke of his interest in the Flora, with its fine palmhouses and beautiful garden, and that he had taken shares in it. He delighted in the establishment of such a place for the recreation of the people, for he loved them, and cherished an unshaken faith in their capacity for improvement.

"The natural strength of our people gives us every reason to hope great things of them," I heard him once say.

We took a long walk in the castle park towards the lake; and when we reached the spot where the little cupid stands opposite the castle, he told us the anecdote about Friedrich I. having had this god placed there during the night, so that his Consort might see it from the window the first thing in the morning.

He stopped at a fine tree, and said to his nephew:

"Do you know, Henry, if I were to begin the world again, and had to choose a profession, I believe I would be an architect. Look at the top of this tree, is not the grandeur of Gothic architecture plainly seen in it?"

"I know now, Excellency, why your are so fond of music," I ventured to remark. "According to Goethe, music is frozen architecture."

He smiled at me, but said nothing, and we returned to the carriage.

His dinners were always of the simplest, such as a good soup, vegetables, a roast and a sweet; but everything was very well cooked, for he was an epicure in the best sense of the word, although he did not like dinner parties. There was an extra dish only when there were guests or on the great festivals, with some sekt in addition to the white wine.

He always avoided large dinners if possible. "Every dinner at the King's table is a trial to one's abstemiousness," he wrote from Stettin in 1879, when attending the Kaiser Manœuvres, "for though one can bear one dinner, twenty-one dinners, one after another, especially as there are several sorts of wine, demand circumspection."

He rarely took more than two glasses of Rhine wine, but he was a good judge of it. Some Rüdesheim was placed before him on one occasion when he was travelling, with the remark that it was of a special quality. After trying it, he could not resist saying: "It is good, but it is not Rüdesheim," an observation which was afterwards criticised as a breach of good manners.

He liked Würzburg Stein wine, but he never drank beer. An admirer of his, a Munich brewer, sent him some bottled beer, begging him to try it, which he of course did. There being no beer glass at hand, he took about half a glass of it in a tea glass, and after drinking a little he said: "There are people who can drink a whole glass of this."

He ate astonishingly little, but he had his favourite dishes, and when he was in a particularly good humour he would have oysters.

He was very fond of cakes, especially of sandtorte, which was always kept in the house, and also of a kind of honey cake, which was sent to him from Holstein regularly every Christmas.

On his return to town from Creisau in the autumn, he always found a large box of Gravenstein apples, the fruit he preferred to all others.

The size of this box was only exceeded by one which the Sultan sometimes sent him from Constantinople, containing a most expensive selection of Turkish cigarettes and tobacco, but which were more suited to the taste of his nephews than his own, for he never smoked either pipes or cigarettes. Most of his presents fared in the same way. A deputation of Germans from Australia brought him a magnificent gold watch and chain and a costly fur rug made of the skins of some rare animals. He was greatly pleased with the gifts, and said: "The Germans over there know how to appreciate our victories almost better than we do." Henry von Burt got the watch, and the furs were sent to Creisau.

The chief hour of the day was when the family met at dinner. The Field-Marshal was always in a good humour, and talkative, and got more so at every course.

He used to chat about incidents in his life; as, for instance, about his last visit to Paris before the war; and of how Napoleon sent him an Order by his son Lulu, and concealed himself behind a curtain to hear how the boy would behave. Or of how his musical susceptibilities were tried by the whining of a Turkish band, and the relief given him afterwards by a

gipsy band. He particularly liked to relate anecdotes about the Kings of Prussia, and one about Frederick the Great and another about Frederick William IV. cling to my memory. The latter on one occasion felt obliged to see a play which bored him extremely, and when he was leaving the theatre, he saw that the attendant had fallen asleep. "Aha," whispered the King to his adjutant, "he has listened to it."

The same King was standing at the door of the supper-room with Moltke during a pause at a Court concert, and a young beauty wished to go in, but did not venture to pass the King.

"Passez beauté," said the King, with a gallant wave of his hand, when an older lady took the opportunity to skip towards the buffet. The King, with a wink at Moltke, whispered: "Beauté passée."

The Field-Marshal had an infinite number of such little anecdotes, and he told them with an inimitable expression of voice and face.

He was always very punctual at dinner, but on one occasion he kept the family waiting for two hours, an event so inexplicable to them that they became alarmed lest something might have happened to him. At last they decided to send to the Reichstag, where they knew him to have

gone; but close to the Brandenburg Gate the old gentleman was met walking along quite happily, his hands behind him as usual, and he was much surprised at the anxiety about him, though he said nothing further till he asked his sister at table:—

"Do tell me, Guste, what you really thought. I wrote and told you that the sitting would be longer to-day, and that you were not to wait for me."

It then turned out that the porter had neglected to deliver the note, so they all had to own to having been mistaken in thinking that he was unpunctual for once in his life. His annoyance at the porter's forgetfulness was shown by his message to him through the servant:—

"Tell the porter that he is an ass," which was the utmost expression of his displeasure.

Coffee was brought in immediately after dinner, and the Field-Marshal took a cigar without leaving the table. He did not pretend to be a connoisseur, and he did not smoke more than two or three cigars a day, after coffee and in the evening, but never when at work. He liked letting the ashes accumulate at the end of his cigar, while the others

anxiously watched lest they should fall on the table-cloth. But that never happened, for he always shook them off into the ash-tray at the last moment. Then he would put the cigar down, which was a sign for the children to leave their "Opapa." The old gentleman never let them go without having a game with them, and it was enchanting to see how the old man of ninety understood how to have a bit of fun with them. He would take the sugar out of his cup and let the charming little things peck at it like little birds; and after they had tried in vain to get it, he would push the spoon into their mouths, or hide his hand and quickly draw it back just as they were trying to get a taste. But when the attack became too strong, and from both of them, he would fly about the room and around the pillars with astonishing rapidity, and only yield after a struggle. After this he withdrew to read in his study. But he returned if he came across anything striking, and read it aloud. It was always a special pleasure when he put on his gold-rimmed glasses for that purpose, and every one came in from the tea-room to listen.

He was a wonderful reader. What an enunciation he had, and how he could bring

out the beauties of an author's style by the modulation of his voice! It often seemed as if a poet's verse were set to music. I shall never forget the impression his reading of Gellert's fables made upon me. He preferred classical literature, but did not neglect modern works, and liked to have an interesting new book brought to him. When Sidney Whitman, an English author, sent him his book, *Imperial Germany*, begging him to look over it, he read it at once, and wrote thanking him for his just estimation of the Hohenzollerns. The letter was printed in the next edition of the book. He liked Treitschke, and read aloud to us his essays on Goethe and Schiller. Naumann's *Illustrated History of Music* is a tolerably thick book, the reading of which for one who was not a musician, meant some labour, and yet he asked me for it; and when I chanced to quote something about Pergolese, I found to my great surprise that he had actually read it.

"I always thought the Italians had invented counterpoint," he said, "and now I learn that it was the Netherlanders."

It was some compensation for his family, when he was obliged to be out in the evening,

for him to read aloud to them first, but if he was not commanded at Court, he nearly always stayed at home, either writing letters, listening to music, playing whist or even patience with the small cards, for he could not stay idly doing nothing. "If the king sleeps, he does not reign," he used to say, when urged to take some recreation.

He generally went to bed about eleven o'clock.

V

AT WHIST

THE daily game of whist was a necessity to the Field-Marshal, for it was a rest and a recreation to him.

He was told regularly soon after seven o'clock that the card-table was ready, and he never kept anyone waiting for him. In Frau von Burt's time they played in her drawing-room, and afterwards in a room adjoining the music-room. The party consisted of Frau von Burt, her son, and Herr Fritz von Moltke, the Field-Marshal's invalid brother; later on, of the nephews and their wives, and frequently of guests, for the Field-Marshal did not like playing dummy. Those who oftenest made up the party were Count Bethusy-Huc (the well-known member of Parliament, who afterwards became the father-in-law of Herr Wilhelm von Moltke, the eldest nephew), Geheimrat von Balhorn,

Geheimrat von Pommer-Esche, Herr von Patow, Count von Waldersee, and sometimes Herr von Websky, whose estate was near Creisau, also joined the party. Countess Bethusy-Huc and Countess Oriola, a daughter of the celebrated Bettina von Arnim, and old Frau von Pommer-Esche, were among the ladies who played occasionally.

Kaiser Wilhelm II. and the Hereditary Prince and Princess of Meiningen sometimes came to the General Staff Department during the Field-Marshal's later years for a game of whist with him.

When an extra player was required, one of the spectators was invited to take a hand, and I myself have had that honour several times, and the Field-Marshal used to be highly amused at my bad playing when I had such a good hand.

On the first occasion, I was asked if I played whist, and I replied :—

"No, but I play preference, and could easily manage if he would tell me which was higher, the king or the ten."

"Ah, that will be pleasant," he said smiling, but invited me with his characteristic wave of the hand, to sit down and draw a card.

Fortune favoured me, for I was his partner. I understood his way of playing from having frequently watched him, and I knew that though he would excuse bad playing, he would not tolerate slow playing.

I paid attention, and my good hand did the rest. The result was that we won, which was satisfactory, for when he lost he blamed his partner. When the game was over he dismissed me with the remark :—

"You play Beethoven better."

He disliked losing at cards, so the family used to manage as far as possible that the game should go as he wished it to go. His wife thought it quite fair to cheat a little to attain this end, so the family were trained to let him win, if they could, without his noticing their manœuvre; and they would reckon up the sums to the smallest amount.

"It is really wonderful that I have won in spite of my bad play," he remarked to me once rather suspiciously, but he abided by the result.

The points were always half a pfennig, and even when he played with the Kaiser the stake was not higher. Under those conditions the gain never amounted to much. On one occasion he won forty pfennige, and was as pleased as a

child: "I only need to add twenty pfennige, and I can take a droschke," he said delightedly.

The Field-Marshal would never use his own horses when the weather was bad. Then he took a droschke—a second-class one, as every one in Berlin knew. On one occasion, as he was about to pay the driver, the man touched his hat and said:—

"It was an honour to me, Excellency, to drive you."

"But, my good man," objected the Field-Marshal, "you have to give your master the fare."

"No, Excellency, I am the master myself," the man called down from the box with pride, and, touching his horse, he was off. The Field-Marshal had, however, taken the number, and he sent the driver his photograph with his autograph beneath it. This soon became known, and a few days later Frau Helmuth von Moltke said at table:—

"Just fancy, uncle, when I drove home to-day the driver did the same thing to me as he did to you the other day. He asked if I were your niece, and then refused to take his money."

"Yes," replied the Field-Marshal jokingly, "he wants to have your likeness."

But to return to the whist parties. They sometimes lasted an hour and a half, but generally over two hours. It depended on how the games went—for the Field-Marshal liked to play them through—or whether he felt inclined for more. He often broke off in order to listen to some music, especially when we had something new to try in which he was interested.

The game called the "Black Lady" was only played at his house, and it was played every evening four times, and always created lively amusement.

Moltke was not a remarkably good whist player, for although he played for the sake of distraction and recreation, his thoughts were always more with his work than with his cards. His mind worked untiringly while he played, and he used to carry on trains of thought which had engaged his attention before he began playing; and when he played away from home, it was not unusual for him to lose. He lost several imperials when playing with the Tzar Alexander II. at St Petersburg.

Shortly after the Franco-German war, Herr[1] and Frau von Keudell were at his house playing whist with him, and a despatch was received,

[1] He afterwards became German Ambassador at Rome.

which, contrary to his custom, he read aloud: A soldier in the garrison at Sedan had ventured outside and been killed. The players went on with their game, but after a while the Field-Marshal laid down his cards and said, without having uttered a word till then:

"I cannot comprehend how one of our men could have failed to understand that he was in the midst of enemies, nor how he could have ventured out so far alone." Then he took up his cards and continued the game.

Still more characteristic was one of the most important orders which he sent off during the war of 1870-1871. He was playing cards in the evening at Bar-le-Duc when the momentous news arrived which led to the interruption of our march on Paris and the movement of the army in the direction of Sedan. The order was already decided on, and Moltke went to the King, who approved of it; after its despatch the rubber was continued, whilst outside the catastrophe of Sedan was being prepared.

VI

MUSICAL EVENINGS

As soon as the Field-Marshal rose from the whist-table he went to the music-room, and there he found most of us assembled. If this were not the case, he would say to me :—

"Shall we not have some music?"

"What would your Excellency like to hear?"

"Oh, play anything you like."

Then he would take a seat in the corner of the sofa, just opposite to the piano, so that he could see the player, and crossing his legs he leant back, and would remain in that attitude without moving for half an hour listening with intense pleasure to the music. I have never seen anyone listen so sympathetically as the Field-Marshal. His judgment was original and he always struck the nail on the head, though his criticism was tempered by kindness if the

music did not please him. Hardness of touch he felt at once, and when the title of a piece was inappropriate he noticed it directly. His hearing was unusually keen and delicate, and the high notes of a violin were distasteful to him, as well as a badly trained voice. Beautiful, rich, expressive alto or bass voices he preferred, and he liked a baritone more than a tenor. He was enthusiastic about the fine bass voices he heard at S. Isaac's Cathedral in St Petersburg, when in attendance on Kaiser Wilhelm I., shortly after the war. He preferred the violin for instrumental music as being the natural interpreter of melody, and just on this account he was most sensitive to it; and it was owing to this sensitiveness that his nephew Wilhelm would not play before him for some years, not until he became an accomplished violinist, in fact. His exquisite taste demanded both clearness and delicacy, and when a composition was affected and confused so that he lost the thread of it, he did not like it, and could not be induced to think differently about it, try as one might to point out its beauties. Thus it was that in spite of many efforts he never could like Brahms. We often played some of his pieces without mentioning whose they were, to try and persuade

him to like them, but we never had the least success. He would notice them immediately, and say :—

"Aha, Brahms," and all our efforts were in vain.

Later on we had no better success with Wagner. He began to shake his head critically at Tristan, though a few scenes of the Nibelungen and the Walküre he liked, but the third act of the Meistersinger made him quite nervous.

"No," he whispered to his sister, "I prefer the Reichstag, for one can move to bring a thing to an end."

The melody of a piece was the chief thing to him, but it must always be healthy and simple, I ought rather to say chaste. One could always delight him more by playing Field, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Kiel, or Draesecke, than with Chopin, although he is extraordinarily melodious. There was a "Je ne sais quoi" in Chopin which repelled the Field-Marshal. He only liked his Funeral March; but he ranked the one in Beethoven's A flat major sonata higher, and loved it beyond everything, and could never hear it too often.

Kaiser Wilhelm II. showed his tender regard for the Field-Marshal's tastes by having both

these pieces played alternately by two bands as the funeral procession made its way to the vault.

The Field-Marshal used to say, when speaking about the Funeral March in the A flat major sonata :—

"It is as if I heard the sobs of the mourners and the muffled drums."

Even the grand march in Eroica and in Siegfried could not approach it, he thought, though I often aspired to make him like them.

It is remarkable that Prince Bismarck also had a great admiration for this piece.

The Field-Marshal's favourite composers were Mozart and Beethoven, and then Bach, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Schubert, and Schumann. He also highly appreciated Löwe's ballads and Robert Franz's songs. He was very susceptible to lively music, and could enter into Haydn's bright quartets, and enjoyed Lortzing's music. He had often heard the Wildschütz, though he rarely went to the opera. Nor was he often seen at concerts, for he enjoyed music in his own house best. He could listen for hours sitting in his sofa corner, and I have been alone in the music-room with him countless times, especially in his later years, playing to him, while his family were engaged in social duties

elsewhere. They were the most perfect hours of my life. How often I wished that others could see him thus. Nowhere else did he so show his human nature, and nowhere else could one reach his heart so well. At such times I involuntarily studied his head and face, and when I thought that I knew every line of his face, another expression appeared, and I began my study afresh. And when he turned his sharp eyes upon anyone near him, I felt what his strength of will must be, and that no one could have ventured to contradict him.

His irony was a powerful weapon, and the lines about his mouth indicated this. And yet what a kind heart and sense of justice shone in his eyes! I can see them now, twelve years after his death, and the remembrance is a possession which no one can take from me.

His hand was as characteristic as his head, and there was more expression in it than in thousands of faces. It was a long, narrow, aristocratic, energetic, artistic, white hand, which inspired both painters and sculptors. I have seen Lenbach study it, and other masters, among them Count von Harrach and Angeli von Deutsch, have reproduced it in pictures. The sculptor has preserved this un-

common hand for future generations, and Siemering made a cast of it holding a pen as if writing.

His head and hand were so characteristic of him that I understand how art always represents the head of Christ with a halo. How is it possible for art to reproduce the sense of spiritual strength? A sort of halo seemed to encircle my solitary listener. There was a repose and harmoniousness in his nature which underlay his genius for action. His spiritual strength influenced those with whom he talked. However tired I might be, a word from him cheered and sustained me.

How could I fail than see in him my ideal, and to serve him was the desire of my life. Where he was, there was my happiness, and I have the deepest conviction that I shall find him again in the next world.

Thus it was that I often sat for hours at the piano playing one thing after another till the family came in and he withdrew. He listened unweariedly and appreciatively to whatever I played, whether it were old Italian or modern French, or classical or romantic music. Sometimes he interrupted me by a question about the composer, if he chanced to be less

well known to him than others, and then we would fall into a long exchange of opinion, for he always had a great interest in art and artists. Gay music often led to animated conversation, and he used to listen with pleasure to anecdotes of musicians.

If he enjoyed my music, how much more did he delight in his nephew's rare gift of song. I have already mentioned his great admiration for Herr von Burt's baritone voice. When he was staying in the house, a day seldom passed without his singing, sometimes for hours, and ever with a fresh revelation of his splendid gift. His uncle especially delighted in hearing him sing Schumann's "Flutenreichen Ebro," and Schubert's "Wanderer," as well as Beethoven's songs, "An die ferne Geliebte" and "In questa tomba."

Herr von Burt also played well on the piano, and we would often go to the music-room, where there was a fine collection of all kinds of music, and play duets while the rest were at whist.

The Field-Marshal never let us wait long for him, and the others of the party followed, and then we would have a little concert which was a pleasure to the performers before such an appreciative audience. In old times

the musical entertainments were generally given by us two, and only occasionally some amateur whose performance was much liked joined us. Among these was Count Otto von Moltke, a distant relation, called in the family "the black Moltke," because he was not fair like the others. Count Carl von Pückler, Herr August von Thaden, Dr von Schelling, the son of the minister, and Herr von Jagow, who played on the piano. Captain Reinhold, an excellent violoncellist Herr Gerlach, the Councillor of Legation, a magnificent tenor violin player, and Lieutenant Lietzmann,[1] a violinist, also took part, and Frau Rohr-Levetzow and Countess Emmy Bethusy-Huc sang.

The programme was much improved when Herr Wilhelm and Herr Helmuth von Moltke were with us, for in them we had an excellent violoncellist and an equally good violinist, and we were able to have chamber music. It was an event when we performed our first trio, Haydn's G major Trio, and it gave the Field-Marshal great pleasure. From Haydn we went to Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and lastly to more modern masters, Friedrich Kiel and Niels Gade.

[1] Now General Lietzmann, Chief of the Staff College.

The Field-Marshal had given his nephew Wilhelm a wonderful violin, a genuine Steiner,[1] which had belonged to Countess von Brühl, and Herr Helmuth emulated his brother by his playing on the violoncello, from which he produced unusually beautiful organ-like tones.

Our trio retired into the background when the party was a large one, from sheer modesty. Even Herr von Burt rarely sang on these occasions, leaving the entertainment to such performers as Count von Hochberg, Count von Dankelmann, and Herr Senfft von Pilsach and others.

Professionals were regularly invited on these evenings, and the music was such as could scarcely be heard anywhere else. Joachim played and Frau Joachim sang, and De Ahna and Hausmann joined in the trios, while professionals from other places also took part, including Wilhelmi, and Remmele, the alto violinist from Dresden, and Heymann, the pianist.

Sometimes there was recitation, and whole

[1] A German violin made at Hall, in Tyrol, by Jacob Steiner (born 1620, died 1683). Marcus was almost as famous for his violins as his elder brother Jacob Steiner. —Tr.

scenes from "Manfred" were declaimed by Richard Kahle. The Field-Marshal listened to that actor with pleasure, and he was often invited. He never left without having recited Heine's "Seegespenst."

Moltke had no sympathy with Heine, but he loved his poems, and as far back as 1829 he wrote to his brother Ludwig:—

"I am reading with great pleasure Heine's 'Reisebilder,' of which I have told you. They are really excellent, full of wit and talent. It is a pity that the author's personality is not pleasanter, for he is an utter atheist, and his vanity is as great as his discontent, and they are unmistakable."

Princess Radziwill and Count and Countess von Waldersee were among the guests on these evenings, and in later years the Hereditary Prince and Princess of Meiningen were nearly always there. Other frequent guests were the American Ambassador, Mr Bancroft; the Greek Minister, M. Rhangabé; and Lord Methuen, Military Attaché to the British Embassy in Berlin, who has since been known as one of the generals in the war in South Africa. He was very much beloved,

and received a medal from Kaiser Wilhelm I. for saving a boy from drowning.

I never heard Joachim play more magnificently than at these little parties. He felt how much the Field-Marshal appreciated his art, and it inspired him. The longer he played —and he played more on one evening at the General Staff Department than in three concerts —the more genial he became. For his last piece he always played Schumann's "Abendlied," which Moltke used to call "Our Musical Tattoo."

The Field-Marshal disliked shaking hands, and rarely did so, even in welcoming and taking leave; but he never let Joachim go without a pressure of the hand, and he often did the same to me.

Moltke had always loved the violin, and Frau von Burt told me that he used to make translations from English and French in order to have the means to go to the theatre and concerts, and that he never missed hearing any celebrated violinist. Paganini interested him extremely, and on hearing his celebrated pupil, Savori, play, he wrote quite a little romance about Paganini the same evening to his *fiancée*, Miss Marie Burt. After the Field-Marshal's death, Herr

von Burt presented the letter to Joachim, and it is here printed for the first time:—

BERLIN, *December* 1. 1841.

It is already eleven o'clock, but I will have a little chat with you. I have just come from a concert at the Opera House, and I am quite full of it. Savori, a pupil of Paganini, the heir of his violin, played. I have never heard such playing. He has his own secret relationship to his violin.

Sixty years ago, a man lived in Italy who as a youth was singularly ugly. His long, raven black hair hung wildly about his sallow face. His countenance resembled the crater of an extinct volcano, and his features were expressionless till he was moved by some passion. Then they became wildly distorted, and his dark eyes would sparkle and show the fire within, as the fires of Etna smoulder beneath the snow. Such a soul was not made to please the world; men hated and women scorned him, and he was alone, quite alone in the world.

As every one has some one thing to compensate him for other losses, Pietro had the gift of music. He wandered at night about his little house in Ravenna, playing mournful melodies. Once he opened his window, which was fastened up with oiled paper, and gazed out

at the starry sky, from which, however, not one of the many stars smiled down at him. Then he heard gentle hands applauding his music. It was the beautiful Aniella, his neighbour. This was repeated on the following nights, and Pietro was soon in love with the beautiful young girl, who was also rich, and not only was his violin but his voice the interpreter of his feelings. An acquaintance grew up between them, but Aniella had only heard him, and he trembled at the moment when she should see him.

Someone has said that men lose their hearts through their eyes, and women through their ears. Aniella loved him, and would have loved him had he been ten times as ugly. But the Italian could not believe it, and with this stormy passion a raging jealousy took possession of him. He distrusted every one, even himself and his beloved, and he tormented her as much as he idolised her. Her protestations, her assurances, and her reproaches were only a proof to him of her guilt, and the thought of her guilt made him so boundlessly wretched, that he forced himself to believe in her assertions so that he might not be rendered desperate.

I do not know how it was that some malign chance caused him to doubt her faithfulness, and only this much is known, that Aniella was found stabbed by a stiletto, and that Pietro

gave himself up to justice, for he could no longer endure life, and wished it to end.

But that mercy was not to be his. He was sent to the galleys, and as he was too weak to work, he was put into solitary confinement. With the night came frightful figures haunting the place, and seeming to threaten him with their bloody claws as he lay upon his straw pallet. He screamed, but no one heard him. The companionship of a wretched criminal, or even of a dog, would have been a mercy to him, but he was alone.

And yet not quite alone, for there was his violin. He seized it convulsively, and had hardly touched the bow before music, wonderfully sweet, sad, reproachful, but with a forgiveness that cheered him, was heard. It was the voice of Aniella, just as she had soothed, flattered, and counselled him, and as she had wept. It was clear to him that Aniella's soul had entered into his violin, and it seemed to him as if some part of his sin could be atoned for by his unutterable misery, and that the departed, who was now dwelling in his violin, had promised him forgiveness. Then one of the strings broke, and another, and yet another, till a cry of sorrow swelled through the desolate cell. It was the dying cry of the murdered one. The unhappy man

sank down exhausted, his mind benumbed, and he was lost in unconsciousness, which is the last solace of the afflicted.

The next day the prisoner implored the warder to get him three strings for his violin. His whole being for good or ill seemed to depend upon getting them. But he had no money with which to soften the man's hard heart, and words could not win him.

Only the G string remained, and the beloved instrument was gazed at with sorrow. But that recalled the rich contralto voice of his dear one. He sat motionless all day staring before him, and when the shadows of night fell he seized the only solace of his misery and played, drawing forth the most wonderful melodies. He composed the melody of the song, "Das Glück, das einst mich hegte," three times over, and thus he played the whole night. By long practice he conquered every difficulty, and performed upon one string what others had never done upon four. He played the melody with the bow, the pizzicato notes with his fingers, producing harmonies, runs and trills, slurred notes, and the most difficult passages with incredible ease. He played thus for ten years without being heard by any one, and he left the dismal cell to return to the bright world a complete master of the instrument.

He changed his name and wandered to distant countries. An overpowering shyness kept him from intercourse with others, and the tones of his violin spoke louder than words as to the state of his soul. But necessity drove him to the market with his gift, and the name of Paganini filled the world. Thousands poured into the brilliant Opera House to hear the stranger, and he stood there pale as death, indifferent to all, until the first movement of his bow enthralled both himself and the throng. He remained cold under their stormy applause, and gazed absently at the thousands of his audience, for his soul was elsewhere, and he was lost in thought as soon as the last sound from his instrument had died away. He who was a celebrity throughout the world, hastened back to his solitude. There he counted the money that filled his strong-box, but without any delight in it. He went to the card-table and staked his all on a card, and won and lost ten times over; but the dreadful emptiness of his heart remained, and left him untouched by the passion of play. His one solace was his violin.

His music has died away, he has breathed his last long sigh, and his bones rest in an unknown grave. For when the weary pilgrim, at a great age and worn out by sorrow, re-

turned from the foreign lands where tongues were strange, to the orange groves of his home, he was denied the last mercy—burial in consecrated ground.

In short, Miezchen, if the story is not true, it might well be so, for when one listens to the violin, one is fain to believe it, and I at least think it to be just what I have told you.

As it is far past midnight, I will only add good-night to you, and tell you to forget this mood, which made a *nervous gentleman near me faint.*[1] However, when a man has nerves like thread, such things affect him.

Now adieu, sweet little soul,

Most affectionately your

HELMUTH.

Even in my time the Field-Marshal was enthusiastic about Savori and his master, and I think that Joachim's playing recalled his past delight in hearing the violin during the time of his engagement.

He certainly felt that Joachim's rendering of Bach, his dramatic power when playing Beethoven, his grace and beauty of touch in Mozart's compositions, and the gaiety of his style in playing Haydn, were entirely

[1] These words are in English in the original.—TR.

different from the Italian master's technique; and I am convinced that he was in full agreement with my reply to a question of his own concerning the difference between Paganini and Joachim, when I said: "There might be another Paganini, but never a Joachim."

We had our musical parties as well as a ladies' choir for some years, and various concerts in aid of charitable objects were given with the assistance of the best professionals. We formed a committee and looked for a room in which to have our practice, but when the Field-Marshal heard of this from his niece, Frau Helmuth von Moltke, he at once placed his large reception hall at our service. We met there on Sunday evenings. The committee consisted of ten ladies: Countess Pourtales, Frau von Boyen, by birth a Princess Biron, Countess Stolberg zu Wernigerode, Countess von Arnim (Bismarck's sister), Frau von Pommer-Esche, Countess Oriola, Frau von Rohr-Levetzow, Frau Helmuth von Moltke, Frau vom Rath, and Countess zu Eulenburg. Frau Helmuth von Moltke was president, and her husband drew up the rules and undertook the post of honorary secretary, librarian, etc. They had undertaken a difficult

task, and we all owed them a debt of gratitude. But the choir had much success in the attainment of our object, that of giving pleasure to the Field-Marshal.

More than sixty ladies of high social rank were members of the choir—ladies charming in themselves, and possessed of excellent voices—princesses, bearers of brilliant names, such as Princess Stolberg zu Wernigerode, Countess von Harrach, the young Comtesses von Arco, Frau von Wildenbruch, Countess von Kanitz, Countess von Dohna, and Countess von Bernstorff—all took part in a first-rate performance with the one object in view, the Field-Marshal's entertainment. A rehearsal rarely took place without his giving us the honour of his company, and when he cried "Bravo" to the ladies, their eyes would sparkle and their colour rise with pleasure at his approval.

We gave a concert every year for some benevolent object. The first one took place in the hall of the Staff College, to raise funds for a memorial to Friedrich Kiel.[1] It was a special compliment to me as his pupil and friend. We rendered the whole of Pergolese's "Stabat

[1] A well known and very good musician. He was an excellent composer. Died in 1885.—Tr.

Mater," with soprano and alto solos, female chorus and orchestra; also a sacred chorus by Lotti, and the duet between Christ and S. Peter from Friedrich Kiel's "Christus." Frau Marie Schultz, Frau von Rohr-Levetzow, Herr von Willich, and Herr von der Marwitz sang the solos. The concert began with a prologue by Wildenbruch, declaimed by Herr von Barby.

The Field-Marshal appeared punctually, notwithstanding his disinclination for that sort of entertainment, and remained till the end, and the next day said at dinner, "I did the professional applauding."

We enlarged our programme till it included music by Palestrina, down to Woldemar Bargiel. Then we gave a concert in the Singing Academy, at which the Crown Prince, afterwards Kaiser Friedrich, and the Court were present. We obtained six thousand marks for the poor. The third concert was given at the General Staff Department, and the audience came by invitation only, among whom was my patroness, Princess Bismarck.

The Field-Marshal inspired the artists by deeds and not merely as a listener, and he offered suggestions to them. He gave me the opportunity of having the cantata performed

which I had composed in honour of Kaiser Wilhelm's ninetieth birthday, but which, however, was only performed in public after his death.

A remark of the Field-Marshal's one evening to the effect that the war had not inspired the national poetry, moved me to play some patriotic songs, for I usually only played operatic and classical music. This induced him to ask me: "Why are you playing these pieces?"

"I wished to prove to your Excellency their original power and sound feeling."

He went into his study without replying, and I was left alone with Herr Helmuth von Moltke in some uncertainty. He returned, however, directly, holding a printed sheet in his hand. He leant against the piano, and putting on his glasses, he began to read us a poem by Ernst von Wildenbruch, composed for the Kaiser's ninetieth birthday. While he was reading it I felt how well the words would go to music, and when he had finished he asked me: "Can you set this to music?"

"Yes, Excellency," I replied.

His wish fired me with a burning passion to carry it out, and I set to work. In a fort-

night the outline was so far advanced that I was able to begin on the real work of the score. The choir commenced practising it under Professor Felix Schmidt. He conducted his one hundred and fifty pupils of the Berlin Singing Society, supported by two hundred and fifty ladies. The orchestra of the Philharmonic Society was engaged, and Count von Hochberg consented to the assistance of the best singers for the solos. Herr Louis Ravené placed his fine picture gallery at our disposal for the rehearsals, and all was ready for the performance on the Kaiser's birthday, but he fell ill, and died a few weeks before. The concert was put off for a long time, owing to the additional mourning for Kaiser Friedrich.

But it took place at last on January 19, 1889, at the Singing Academy, in aid of the Oberlin Society, of which the Field-Marshal was a patron, and a lament for the great Kaiser's death was added to the first part.

At the entrance of the Field-Marshal the entire audience and the performers rose in token of their respect.

VII

OTHER MUSICAL OCCASIONS

MOLTKE had a special admiration for Friedrich Kiel, whose compositions had first been introduced to him by Herr von Burt. He considered his "Christus" a striking modern work, and before its performance he had sent for the text, written by Kiel himself, and taken from the Bible. What particularly pleased him in this work was, that it did not end with our Lord's death, like the compositions of Bach and his predecessors, but with His Transfiguration. The spirituality of tone made a deep impression on him, and his interest was aroused from that time forward, and he ordered a box for himself and family, and invited Countess Emmy von Bethusy-Huc and my insignificant self to be of the party. Thus I had an opportunity of observing what an impression the piece made upon him, and how fixed was his attention from the first note to the last. After the chorus, "Behold I stand at the

door and knock," tears shone in his eyes, and he whispered to his sister: "I should like to hear that again." He was just as much affected by the duet between Christ and S. Peter, when Christ asks, "Lovest thou Me?" And he said to Frau von Burt: "Has it ever struck you that the Saviour asked S. Peter three times, 'Lovest thou Me?' Three times after he had denied Him—three times! It is little noticed, but it is significant."

After the deep meaning of the words, "It is finished," had been grandly rendered by the orchestra, he turned to us and said: "I have never heard anything more beautiful."

The Field-Marshal congratulated me after the performance on having been the pupil of such a master, whereupon I ventured to observe that no works had been written so well throughout since those of Bach and Händel, with regard to counterpoint.

"But I could not detect a fugue in it," he returned; a remark which pleased the modest Kiel when I told him immediately after, for by this unconscious praise he had paid him the compliment that musical resourcefulness and feeling were stronger in effect in this composition than knowledge of counterpoint.

Later on we played the "Christus" for the Field-Marshal, who liked to have Herr von Burt sing the duet between Christ and S. Peter, or rather the conversation between them, and he always referred anew to the text, when we played one after the other from Bach, Händel, and Kiel, so that he could recognise the characteristic parts of the composers.

On one occasion there was a dispute about the question which has been much discussed for many centuries, as to when an absolute melody might be accompanied by harmony.

"Ah, that question nowadays would be put in the reverse sense—whether harmony could bear melody," the Field-Marshal said rather sarcastically.

After that performance of the "Christus," the Field-Marshal never lost interest in Kiel. He often heard of him from Herr von Burt, who visited Kiel every week, and occasionally persuaded him to be present at small parties at the General Staff Department.

Kiel once gave a matinée at the house of his friend, Karl Graeb, the painter, at which Moltke had promised to be present. But at the last moment an important sitting in the Upper House placed him rather in a dilemma, which he

settled by going first with Frau von Burt and a niece and Herr von Burt to the matinée, and then leaving quietly to attend the sitting.

The Field-Marshal was present at a large musical soirée given by Joachim, who led Schumann's celebrated quintet, Frau Clara Schumann being at the piano, expressly for his distinguished guest. After it was finished the Field-Marshal had a long conversation with Frau Schumann. His presence at the soirée was such a surprise to the numerous other guests, that they drew back from him, and for some time he sat quite alone, till he invited me by a look to sit beside him, thus making that soirée an unforgettable memory to me.

I have also a lively remembrance of a concert which I conducted at the General Staff Department. It was given by a musical society, consisting of fifty gentlemen—officers, scholars, artists, and officials in high position. Although they were only amateurs, their musical gifts and their interest in the society caused them to attain to such excellence as would not have put a professional to shame. In Herr von Höther, Director of the Ministry, we had a real Betz, in Colonel Auer a Gura, and in Geheimrat Dr Wühlich a Wachtel. Herr Heckmann, the archi-

tect, Herr Niemann, and President Fuisting had powerful voices. The latter was president of our society, and his bass voice was of such remarkable compass that he could sing baritone parts, while in depth it was only excelled by that of Captain Knack, whose low C reminded one of the church singers in Russia.

I naturally spoke of this choir to the Field-Marshal, in which there was so much zeal that a member of it, General Johannes, although in his seventieth year, took singing lessons in order to make his tolerably good tenor voice more flexible. Thus it followed that Moltke became by degrees interested, and one evening he asked his nephew, Helmuth :—

"Would you not like to hear this choir ?"

Herr Helmuth came and was conquered, and at my next visit the Field-Marshal asked me if the choir would sing in public so that he might hear it.

What a jubilation this caused when I mentioned it. It was fully discussed, and finally decided to ask if they might sing before the great General in his own house. After they had all left cards and the Field-Marshal had received the president of it, they were invited one evening. They assembled in the large hall, where Frau

Helmuth von Moltke did the honours, and the Field-Marshal received them with the most gratifying kindness. He and his family sat opposite the singers, and I gave him a programme which had been illuminated by Herr Koerber, an architect.

We sang several patriotic choruses unaccompanied, among them "Lutzow's Wilde Jagd," by Weber, and it recalled to our listener many memories of his youth. Schubert's and Schumann's songs were sung, and a duet from Händel's "Judas Maccabeus," and President Fuisting gave us the deep bass note in the Sarastro Arie with such effect that the Field-Marshal told him the following little anecdote:—"A well-known basso, on being complimented on his powerful rendering of the low E, answered:—

"'Oh that is nothing, you should hear me sing the part of Sarastro, there I take the C an octave lower.' 'Yes, and usually flat,' interrupted a voice from the back."

The Field-Marshal's affability made the happiest impression, and I have seldom conducted with such pleasure as on that evening. We wound up with the chorus from my festival cantata, which touched Moltke so much that he kindly asked for it a second time.

Supper was served between the parts, and our kind host took that opportunity to have the different members introduced to him, saying a few pleasant words to each. Then followed some amusing incidents. One of the party imitated the violoncello so well with his mouth that we could have fancied Servais was playing; and another, by means of a brush, played "The Carnival of Venice" on the piano; and someone else whistled the difficult Rossini Arie.

The Field-Marshal drew nearer to the players, so that he should not miss anything, and enjoyed himself very much. His hearty laugh encouraged them to fresh performances, and midnight came before the dear old gentleman let us go.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

VIII

MOLTKE IN SOCIETY

THE Field-Marshal went out into society very reluctantly, and the one thing that could induce him to do so was the prospect of hearing good music. But this was not of frequent occurrence in Berlin society, so the circle was small for him in proportion. He never missed the Kaiserin Auguste's Thursday musical parties, and he also went to Count von Hochberg's, Prince Radziwill's, Count Bethusy-Huc's, Herr von Pommer-Esche's, Countess Oriola's, and some others.

The Kaiserin Auguste had the finest musical performers in Berlin on Thursdays. Under the directorship of Herr Taubert, Director of the Court band, all the distinguished artists in the world when in Berlin were there. Rubenstein, Sarasate, Servais, Padilla, Desirée Artot, Pauline Lucca, Marianne Brandt, Lilli Lehmann,

Niemann, Wachtel, Betz, and Fricke were invited, but amateurs were rarely asked. I remember, however, that Herr von Burt sang the "Dichterliebe" by Schumann, accompanied by Frau von Schleinitz, the wife of the minister.

These Thursday evenings at Court were of special interest to us, because the Field-Marshal told us about them at dinner the next day. He told us with a smile, among other things, that at the Court concerts in the time of Frederick the Great the foreign artists received presents, while those at home had, on the contrary, a fixed sum—a Friedrich d'or, which in our present money is about seventeen marks and fifteen pfennige. No one dared decline it, and they all had to give a receipt for it. This custom was only discontinued by Kaiser Wilhelm II.

On one occasion the Field-Marshal had a little joke with Frau Artot about a song she had been singing. It was in Spanish, the words of it were rather questionable, but she took it for granted that no one present understood that language. He went up afterwards and asked her what the words were.

"Ah, Excellency, they are not easily translatable into German," she replied evasively.

"You are right, there would not be many people here who understood Spanish," he answered in fluent Spanish, not a little to the singer's confusion.

The Kaiserin Auguste spoke once about her masseuse, old Mirgemann, saying:—

"The good woman gave me a good deal of pain to-day; and just fancy, Field-Marshal, when I complained she said: 'Ah, it is not so bad, Majestätchen.'"

She also told the Field-Marshal some anecdotes about the Shah of Persia. The Shah was at the opera with the Kaiserin, and after the second act she got up to leave, but as the ballet which was to be given interested the King of all kings particularly, he tapped the Kaiserin on the arm, and pressed her back to her seat, as a sign that he wished to stay longer. On taking leave of the Kaiser, he observed: "I am quite satisfied with your government."

The musical soirées which Count von Hochberg had at his house in Wilhelmstrasse, at the end of the year 1870, and before he began the Silesian musical festivals, were a great attraction to Moltke. He felt in peculiar sympathy with the refined art which the Count and Countess had at their house, and he

especially delighted in hearing the Count sing Beethoven's "Schottische Lieder" and Schumann's "Waldesgespräch"; and I must not omit to mention that the Count once sang for him a song of my composition, "Volkers Lied," with violin and piano accompaniment.

There was also very good music at Countess Emmy Bethusy-Huc's, where a pupil of Jenny Meier's sang with much success. The Field-Marshal had admired her strikingly beautiful voice when he heard it at the Count's parliamentary dinners. This amiable couple were afterwards connected with the Moltke family, as Herr Wilhelm von Moltke married their eldest daughter, the Comtesse Ella.

Frau Pommer-Esche received nearly all the artists who came to Berlin, and she introduced them to many circles of society. No bazaars nor charitable concerts took place without Frau von Pommer-Esche's patronage, and their Majesties always sent for her when anything was to be done in that way. She succeeded with all she undertook, for she had the gift of inducing others to help her, and no one could resist her.

But in the Field-Marshal with his imperturbable calm she met her master. She once waited a whole evening for a favourable moment to lay

some plan before him, but he had guessed this, and when at last she thought she had secured him, he said an impressive "Good-night," and disappeared.

Herr von Kusserow's house was an El Dorado for all young amateurs, for there they could win their spurs without running any risks. Countess von Oriola's *salon* had a character of its own, and all the Diplomatic Corps met in it; and Molkte's unusual linguistic talent was much valued there. He was master not only of French, English, Italian, but also of Spanish, Danish, and Turkish, though he did not care to display his gifts in that line unnecessarily. If a foreign diplomatist or military man understood German, he always preferred to talk to him in his mother-tongue.

Among the musical treats which specially remain in my memory in connection with this house was the wonderful singing of Countess von Arnim, by birth a Countess Bismarck-Bohlen.

Countess Oriola was a witty and brilliant member of the Court circle of that time. Once when I complained to her of having my German name spoilt by incorrect pronunciation, she replied: "You must not take it so seriously.

What do you think of my being often called Countess Gorilla?"

Their Majesties were often at Prince Radziwill's, and on one occasion when I led the musical performances, there were no less than twenty-one crowned heads present. It was the evening before Kaiser Wilhelm's eightieth birthday, and nearly all the German princes were there, and from their midst stood out the noble figure of the Crown Prince Friedrich, an unforgettable picture of manly beauty.

As an attention to the Kaiserin Auguste, her favourite part from "Lucia" and another from Rossini's "Messe" were performed by Artot, Lilli Lehmann, Padilla, Herr von Burt, Herr von Bülow, Herr von Benckendorff, as well as the quintet, "Cosi fan tutte." To Kaiser Wilhelm's surprise and pleasure, Herr von Burt sang some songs by old Prince Radziwill, the composer of the music to "Faust," which awoke loved memories in the old monarch, for he thanked Herr von Burt with a speaking glance.

What charming people there were among the distinguished guests at Princess Radziwill's. Never shall I forget the fascinating appearance of the youngest daughter of Count Putbus, the lovely Countess von Harrach, and the beautiful

Comtesse Hildegard von Usedom, whom Wagner admired as a Brunhild.

There was seldom any music at the Chancellor's, for in his later years Bismarck could only endure music from a distance, and a sharp touch on the piano irritated him, though he liked a soft one, and he enjoyed listening to his wife's music.

I should like to say that, before I went to the Field-Marshal's, I had been giving Comtesse Marie von Bismarck music lessons. I had been recommended during the war by Countess von Roon, the daughter-in-law of the Minister of War, and I had been received in the kindest manner. I was much of a sufferer at that time, and I feel undying gratitude when I recall the years of endless kindness which was shown to me by the Princess Bismarck. I owe my acquaintance with the modern German lyric to her, and she first made me appreciate the poems of Theodor Storm, Count von Strachwitz, Eichendorff, Uhland, etc., by reading them to me.

I saw the Prince for the first time immediately after his return from France. I was playing one of Chopin's nocturnes, and in my absorption I did not notice his entrance; he let

me play on, and then greeted me kindly, as if he had long known me.

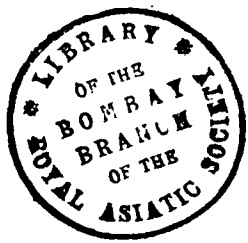
Count von Moltke scarcely ever went to the Chancellor's except to attend the large diplomatic dinners. Shortly before the Prince moved to the Palace Radziwill, he had been dining there, and on his return said that Prince Bismarck had been in a particularly good humour, and had shown him over his house, and, turning to his nephew, Herr von Burt, added :—

"Just fancy, Henry, he has my picture hanging up in his study."

The Field-Marshal frequently sat near the Princess at these dinners, and had much lively conversation with her, and she would tell him various anecdotes. One about Wagner is as follows :—

Frau von Schleinitz was known to be an enthusiastic Wagnerian, and soon after Wagner had broken with his friend, Hans von Bülow, and married his wife, she had invited Bülow's daughters and Cosima to her house. To explain the somewhat mixed family relations, they were accustomed to call Bülow father and Wagner papa. Both men were in Berlin at that time, and one day when Bülow and his daughters were having coffee with Frau von Schleinitz, the

door suddenly opened and a servant brought in a card which one of the daughters read, and cried out: "Father, papa is coming." The next moment the father disappeared through one door while papa entered by another.



IX

CHANGES IN THE HOUSE

FRAU VON BURT died suddenly on March 27, 1883, after staying with her son Henry at a health resort in Switzerland. Herr von Burt was ill at Zurich, and the anxiety occasioned by this brought on heart trouble, and she died quite unexpectedly.

The Field-Marshal was unspeakably shaken, the more so as, in order to spare him anxiety, he had not been told of her illness. I called upon him the same day. He had not received anyone, but let me go to his study, which he had not left since the sad news had come.

"I heard to-day, Excellency, that Frau von Burt is dead, is it true?" I asked.

"Yes it is true," he replied walking up and down the room in deep trouble. "She was on a visit to her daughter at Potsdam, and died there last night."

His voice sounded as firm as ever, and anyone standing at a distance would not have seen how powerfully he was moved. But I felt it, and for the first and only time in the whole twenty years did I ever see him shaken from his self-control.

I saw him again at the funeral. He had sat silent alone by the coffin for a long time. No one ventured to disturb him. Then when it was about to be carried from the house to be taken to Creisau, he stood up and laid his right-hand at the head of it till the bearers came.

He had her laid in the mausoleum where her stepdaughter, his beloved wife, rested.

A few years later he led me there on one of his daily walks thither. In the little chamber lighted by a stained-glass window, stood the two coffins, covered with flowers withered and fresh, one standing on the right side of it and the other on the left, while the space in the middle was empty.

"There lies my wife," he said, laying his customary little bunch of wild flowers on the right hand coffin, "there my sister, and here in the middle—is my place."

. . . . . .

Herr von Burt's condition became worse on the sudden death of his mother, so he had to give up all idea of resuming his duties with his uncle. The Field-Marshal was so deeply affected by this sorrow, that his family were much concerned about him, and added to this was the sudden isolation. Herr von Burt was in a sanatorium, his nephews were at a distance; Herr Wilhelm von Moltke was at Charlottenburg with his regiment, the Gardes du Corps, and Helmuth von Moltke in the 1st Foot-Guards at Potsdam; Fritz was assessor at Oppeln, and Ludwig was going through a course of agricultural studies.

The Field-Marshal in his solitude was thrown upon his servants, so that it chanced that the dear old gentleman, who had so few personal wants, was forced to go without his most necessary comforts. He was obliged to dine at the Hotel St Petersburg, and one evening when I went to see him the tea was brought in looking like ink, and quite undrinkable. I begged his permission to prepare it myself, and it gave him visible pleasure to watch me do so. He observed me closely, and I think he would have quite laughed had I made a mistake. But I was certain about

it, and handed him the first cup with the remark:—

"You may find my compositions bad, Excellency, but not my tea."

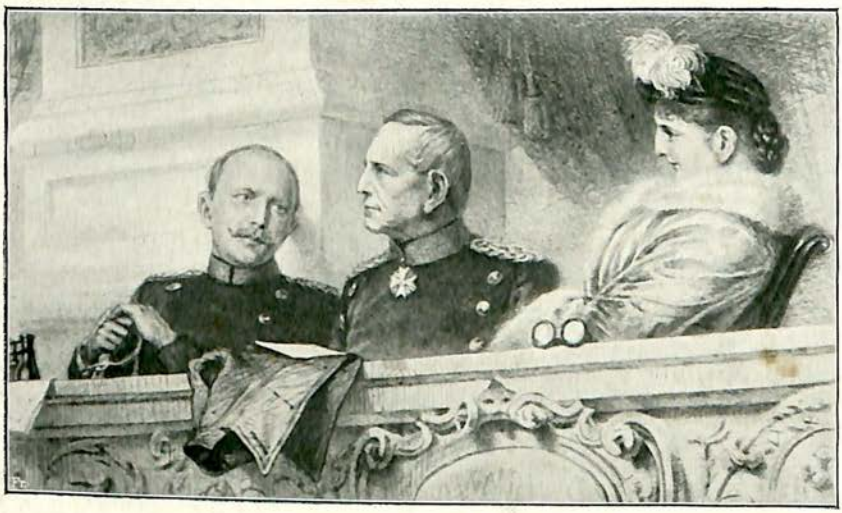
He laughed, and drank it, and wanted another cup, not a little to my satisfaction.

Herr von Burt returned shortly after, but only to beg the Field-Marshal's leave to retire. His condition had improved in some measure, but he had come to the conclusion that his strength would not permit him to fulfil his duties to his uncle, especially now without his mother's help. And he maintained his resolution notwithstanding all objections; and even when his uncle begged him to remain at least in the army, and only give up his post temporarily, he replied:—

"No, dear uncle, one who has served you so long, could not serve another."

There was nothing left for the Field-Marshal but to acquiesce, and to ask the Kaiser to appoint his nephew Helmuth to the adjutancy instead. Herr Helmuth von Moltke had married Comtesse Liza von Moltke-Hvitfeldt a few years before this.

Herr von Burt went away, and soon after



MOLTKE WITH HIS NEPHEW AND NIECE AT A CONCERT.

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became so ill that the Field-Marshal was for months in great anxiety about him.

I at last had a letter of invitation from him. He was staying at a sanatorium at Kreischa, near Dresden. The whole tone of the letter led me to conclude that he was decidedly better, and delighted me so much that I set off at once to visit him. My expectations were not exaggerated, and I found my dear Herr von Burt as well and cheerful as before. He came to meet me, and we spent three delightful days together.

I drove at once to the General Staff Department on my return to Berlin, before going to my own home, for I could have no rest till I had talked to the Field-Marshal. I had been accustomed only to knock and go in to him at any hour, but now the servant detained me with the remark that he must announce me first. The old factotum could not forget the tea incident, and had sulked about it ever since. But he was soon taught better, for the door was suddenly opened and the Field-Marshal came out and asked:—

"Why don't you come in as usual?"

The servant drew back somewhat snubbed, and I could breathe at last.

"I am just back from Kreischa, Excellency, and bring you good news; Herr von Burt has recovered."

He looked at me silently for a moment, and then gave me his hand and said:—

"It was kind of you to have gone to see Henry; I thank you." He inquired about all details, and I could see how near to his heart Herr von Burt was.

That same evening music cheerfully resounded through the house. I had indeed often played during the melancholy days, but my performance was always of a serious sort of music, for Herr von Burt's illness lay upon us all like a pall, and involuntarily his songs mingled in my playing. But this day I began with the overture of "Don Giovanni," and the Field-Marshal showed how much the good news had cheered him up, by standing opposite to the piano and acting the part of conductor, with such spirit that many a celebrated leader would have found himself taken off, had he been there to see it.

In the course of conversation a famous pianist was mentioned, who often sought distinction by the display of tremendous muscular power, and the Field-Marshal, who had lately

heard him, remarked that "he felt the need of a third hand."

He brightened up that evening, and I wish I had had the chance of taking notes of the many bon-mots he let fall in the course of his talk. I have, however, treasured a few of them.

Frau Helmuth von Moltke said that she had heard that Count von Hochberg, who had recently succeeded Herr von Hülsen as director of the Court Theatre, had ordered the ballet to appear henceforth in long skirts, and the Field-Marshal observed, with an expressive gesture :—

"Where does the indecorum really begin?"

Herr Helmuth von Moltke had been present at the last performance of "Tannhäuser," and said that he was surprised that the Venus had been taken by a little insignificant woman, when the scene really demanded a beautiful presence.

"Aha," said the Field-Marshal smiling, "I could also be a Venus by lamplight if rouged."

I did not wish to let his cheerful mood pass without result, and as Herr Helmuth only played with others before his uncle, it seemed

to me a good opportunity for him to be induced to play his violoncello alone.

In spite of all his resistance, he was obliged to fetch his instrument and play an adagio by Bargiel, and the result was brilliant. The Field-Marshal never could hear too much of the violoncello, and in his later years he had been delighted at hearing the celebrated violoncellist, Heinrich Grünfeldt, and the highly-gifted Count Kuno von Moltke.

. . . . . .

After these sad days, the remainder of the Field-Marshal's life was made a very happy one for him. It was a difficult thing to replace his sister, but Frau Helmuth von Moltke solved the problem, and her charming children were an unconscious help to her. She brought one with her, and a second was born at the General Staff Department. The eighty-year-old gentleman had his peculiarities, of course, and it required deep affection to enter into them. But Helmuth and Liza von Moltke possessed that affection, and as they sowed so they reaped. In a short time they had entirely captured the Field-Marshal's heart, and he felt as comfortable again as in old times.

In his duties as adjutant, Herr von Moltke did not neglect his military studies. He worked at the General Staff most energetically, and later on with his regiment, thereby gaining the Field-Marshal's special approbation. Frau Helmuth von Moltke impressed him by her faithful discharge of duty, her amiability, and the versatile power with which she managed the largely increased household. One never heard a loud word from her, and everything went according to rule. She prepared her uncle's breakfast herself, and frequently carried it to him in his study. He repaid her by many grateful glances, and he conceded to her many things which she herself would not have sought. For instance, in his consideration for his coachman and horses, he never used his carriage in bad weather, but with his niece he only made a trifling request:—"Liza, do me the favour not to keep the horses waiting too long."

Thus with the family of Helmuth von Moltke sunshine once more entered the house.

X

CHRISTMAS

THE Field-Marshal withdrew from the Christmas festivities as much as possible in the first years after the death of his wife. He either took that time for travelling on business connected with his profession, or invited himself to go to old friends, so that he need not stay at home at that time, where everything recalled his sad loss. He only conquered this shrinking from home at that season by degrees, and when he saw that it pained his family.

He had already begun to share in the Christmas celebration of 1871, when I was permitted to be one of the party. The tree was then put up in the silver room, and little tables were ranged against the walls with the presents, each person having a table with his name on it.

The first table was the Field-Marshal's, then

came those of the relations who chanced to be in Berlin, then those for the family of servants, porters, coachman, cook, maids, etc.

The most original figure among them was that of August, the coachman, an uncommonly reliable man, who kept the horses excellently, and never gave occasion for any complaints, but who also knew in what favour he stood with his master. It was droll to see August's little, active figure suddenly draw up as straight as a dart the moment the Field-Marshal spoke to him. He never stirred when he sat on the box, and though he heard everything that was said to him from the carriage, he did not move even an eyelash, but kept his eyes fixed steadily on the horses. Servants who felt disposed to converse with him never received any answer, which sometimes occasioned rather strained relations between them. They called him "stuck up," but he endured this reproach with his usual dignity, and this dignity was not least on Christmas Eve.

It was the Field-Marshal who mostly talked to him, asking after his children and other matters. Once he inquired what a glass of schnapps cost.

"Five pfennige, Excellency," answered

August, putting his heels together and standing on his toes.

"If people took less schnapps in the day, they would have enough to pension their old age," said the Field-Marshal, who had been revolving this subject of old-age pensions for years.

My Christmas gifts were always on the table next to those of Herr von Burt, and among the presents of albums, photographs, books, etc., there was always some writing-paper and a pound of tea. Everyone also had a plate of apples, nuts, cakes, and a little marzipan heart. The Field-Marshal always got one, and it was double the size of the others, although I never saw him touch it. He probably gave it afterwards to the servants' children, who had a tree in another part of the house. The servants received clothes, useful articles, and money.

The tree stood in the centre of the room, and was only decorated with "angels' hair,"[1] and numerous little candles. A beautiful pine-tree was always chosen, which required no other ornaments. The top almost reached the ceiling, and bore a silver star, probably a symbol of the evening star, which played a great part in the

[1] Very fine threads of gold and silver tinsel.—Tr.

Field-Marshal's imagination. His fancy for it was inherited from his mother, and Herr von Burt seldom missed singing Wolfram's "Song to the Evening Star" to him, after the distribution of the presents.

The Field-Marshal's table was the largest, and there was scarcely room for all the presents which reached him from all parts of the empire, so that chairs were added to hold them, and even then they often stood on the floor. Gifts came from their Majesties, accompanied by cordial letters. The old Kaiser Wilhelm generally presented large bronzes, costly reproductions of the Column of Victory, the Monument to the Great Elector, Friedrich the Great, etc., and the Kaiserin Auguste never allowed a year to pass without sending a present to her "dear Field-Marshal," sometimes with a poem by herself, or a new portrait.

Other German princes often sent valuable gifts. The King of Saxony once sent a Meissner vase a yard in height, a masterpiece which gave the Field-Marshal great pleasure. Most of the things were sent to Creisau, but this magnificent vase he kept for months in Berlin, and as often as he looked at it he found some new beauty to admire.

But the number of presents which came from the people was extraordinary, a touching proof of regard which the Field-Marshal deeply appreciated. A box containing nuts, apples, cakes, always came from Parchim, his native town. He received gifts from his countrymen of every sort of useful article, scarves, warm vests, house shoes, caps, etc., and his old townspeople emulated one another in knitting him thick mittens, and stockings which were too long even for his long legs.

Similar gifts came from Holstein and Creisau also, where none of the inhabitants, from the pastor down to the youngest school child, failed to send something to place under the Christmas tree of their beloved General. Sometimes the presents were the occasion of a joke, as when he took a thick beer-jug bearing his own likeness to his sister, and pointing to the girth of the vessel, said :—

"What do you think of my attaining to this size ? "

Another time he found a good likeness of himself which had been modelled by a soldier in the army at Sedan, out of contract bread. The likeness was striking, especially his carriage, and the Field-Marshal was greatly pleased with it,

and I think he helped the man to take lessons in art later on.

Moltke showed his appreciation of all the various remembrances he received, if they were only letters of affectionate gratitude from quite poor people, by answering them immediately after the New Year; and as they were nearly all written by himself, it took him weeks to do so. When the letters he received contained anything original, he read them aloud.

After Frau Helmuth von Moltke managed his house the Christmas presentations no longer took place in the silver room, but in the large hall next to it. The household had increased, and more relations were added to the family celebrations. Herr Wilhelm von Moltke and his wife and children were sometimes of the party, as well as Herr Fritz von Moltke and his wife, a Fräulein Julie Zuckschwert, of the well-known patrician family of Madgeburg. She was a great student of Goethe and of art. Herr Ludwig von Moltke, the youngest nephew, also came on Christmas Eve.

Frau Helmuth von Moltke's father and mother, Count and Countess Wladimir von Moltke-Hvitfeldt, also often came from Sweden. They were a very amiable couple, whose acquaint-

ance I had the honour of making at that time. The Count was a Grand Seigneur from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, a man of perfect taste, inherited from his mother, a Countess von Nesselrode, whose sympathetic nature was reproduced in him. The Countess had indomitable good temper and great kindness of heart. I had afterwards the pleasure of visiting them at their Swedish home, Ovesarum.

The range of the Christmas festivities had not only widened, but the whole tone had changed, on account of the children. The Field-Marshal was drawn from his study to the card-room, where they all used to assemble. After he had received the guests he occupied himself with the children, who were hardly able to restrain their impatience while their parents were busy with the tree in the next room. He chatted and joked with them, asked all sorts of questions: whether the Christmas man, owing to the great cold and the many steps he had to run up and down, would really come, till their expectations were roused to the uttermost. Then suddenly the clock would strike, the double doors were thrown open, and a flood of light from the brilliantly lighted tree poured in. Everyone went in, and the servants entered from the other side.

Frau Helmuth von Moltke sat down to the piano, and all voices, young and old, joined in singing the Christmas hymn, "Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht." Then each one was led to his or her table, first the children, next the servants, and lastly the grown-up members of the family.

The Field-Marshal made the round, looking at every table, talking to the servants, and after they had withdrawn and the others remained a little longer by the tree, the old gentleman busied himself with the children, who showed him their toys. How often he had to undress Astrid's doll and put it to bed, and Billemann would have left his "Grosspapa" little peace till he had helped to saddle his horse.

Supper ended the Christmas Eve festivities, which began with a Swedish national dish of rice. But the chief dish was the Christmas carp—both the blue and Polish sorts were served —and a gigantic marzipan tart never failed to appear.

Only a few guests were invited to this meal, such as the Danish and Swedish ambassadors, Herr von Wind and Herr von Lagerheim, and some old unmarried friends of the family.

XI

MOLTKE WHEN TRAVELLING

MOLTKE liked to travel. The eagle which spreads its wings after long imprisonment could not love its freedom more than did the Field-Marshal when he was packed bag and baggage and could say adieu to Berlin.

But it is saying rather too much to speak of his things as bag and baggage, for even when he went to any great function, he put on either his uniform or a dress coat, so as to reduce the amount of his luggage. He never took a trunk, only a hand-bag, which he carried himself, and which he could take in the carriage with him. He always travelled in mufti, wearing a dark overcoat, and a small round hat, in which he looked younger than he was. He did not possess a fur coat. Shortly before his death, when he went to Kiel by Kaiser Wilhelm II.'s invitation, the latter put his own fur cloak around him as he stepped on

board the ship, saying, "I should not like you to catch cold."

Moltke always travelled in the early morning, except, of course, when he was obliged to travel suddenly on duty. I appeared regularly the evening before he went away, and we had a good deal of music. I always played his favourite pieces last, and as I stood on the platform the next morning with a bunch of violets, to say good-bye, he often hummed to himself something I had played the previous evening.

As he looked quite different in mufti, he was rarely recognised at the station. He used to walk quietly up and down till the train came, and only got in at the last moment. But once seated he did not leave his place till he reached his destination. The great distance, for instance, between Berlin and Rome he made without a break, but he stopped sometimes at a station only out of consideration for his companion. He took little journeys always alone; even to Silesia or further, he travelled without a servant. One of his nephews accompanied him as adjutant to a health resort, Herr von Burt at first, and Herr Helmuth von Moltke afterwards.

He could travel by train a whole day without fatigue, or needing refreshment. His physician,

Geheimrat Dr Beuster, often wondered how he could keep up so long without food, and once asked him how it was.

"I went hungry for twenty-one years of my youth," the Field-Marshal replied.

On long journeys, however, something was provided without his knowledge, otherwise he would have prevented it. It seemed a burden to him, but later on when some one came at the right moment, he would take a few sandwiches and a little glass of wine.

He was quickly refreshed by a journey, and even when he had been on duty one could see that he felt better for travelling. He nearly always had some adventure, and used to entertain his family with it afterwards.

Once, at Lugano, he was put into a room under the roof at an hotel, till his name in the visitors' book was noticed, when another on the first floor was offered to him with a thousand apologies. The landlord was in despair at having such a thing happen to a celebrated visitor, but all his entreaties were in vain, the Field-Marshal remained where he was.

When at Gastien, he used to take long walks about the neighbourhood, and once he found himself at some hours' distance from it. Feeling

in need of refreshment, a very rare thing with him, he went into a little roadside inn and ordered some wine. The landlord was very loquacious, talked about the place, extolling the baths and the distinguished visitors it brought, including Field-Marshal Moltke, and wound up by asking if he had ever seen him, and what he was like.

"How else should he look than like one of us?" answered the Field-Marshal, a suggestion which greatly flattered the round-cheeked peasant.

The Field-Marshal also frequented Cudowa, especially in his later years, before he settled at Creisau for the summer. This little resort really owes its success to this, and the grateful inhabitants have erected a monument to him in one of their beautiful *allées*.

He retained his love of travelling till the last, and the impression made upon him by San Remo, when he was more than eighty years old, can be seen in the following letter to his brother Ludwig, written on March 24, 1885:—

"Not only are the almond- and apricot-trees in full bloom, but also the pear- and cherry-trees, and oranges and lemons are quite ripe. We

have a view of the deep blue sea from the window, and the stone terrace is a fine promenade, more than a thousand feet in length, bordered by palm-trees, with the sea rolling at its foot. It is delightful on calm days to walk there and listen to the surf. On other days it dashes against the banks till the foam splashes over the Molo. Fine roads through the olive woods lead up the mountain to Madonna della Costa and della Guardia, and others take one past the numerous villas by the sea. The season for violets is over, but roses are just about to bloom, and must present a magnificent sight. The oranges are also beginning to bloom, a sign that the fruit is ripe. However, I enjoy a German spring when it does come, and it is far more beautiful than it is here. The grey olive and ilex are not comparable to green meadows and the first leaves on the beech-trees."

The Field-Marshal liked to recall his visit to Heligoland, when he was there with his *fiancée* and her parents in 1841. The wedding took place at Itzehoe, and Moltke took his young wife to Berlin in his own carriage, driven by the fine horses which the Sultan had presented to him.

He took a long journey with his nephew Helmuth, in the Tatra, only three years before

MOLTKE AT BAD CUDOWA.

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his death, and did not shrink from the privations which a journey through that inhospitable region brought. There were no hotels at that time in the Goral, the Polish part, which he crossed from Cracow. They had to pass the nights in peasants' cottages, and they carried their food with them, traversing great distances either on foot or in the primitive one-horse vehicles, a tour which hardly any one of eighty-eight years would think of making.

He was interested, when travelling, in the striking buildings of the towns, and described them in his letters; and when he had time, he even made very clever drawings, showing his sharp insight into the salient aspect of things by a few characteristic touches. And he sketched bits of the landscape which had particularly attracted him, and in earlier times he made studies of the people. He made quantities of such studies in Turkey, both in pencil and colour, and his nephew Herr Helmuth says in the first volume of the collected works, that he even copied large pictures in the galleries.

But the buildings occupied him most, for he had a special love for architecture, and if the subject was alluded to in conversation he was certain to take it up. If the Kremlin at

Moscow was mentioned, he dropped his habitual reserve, and would describe with skill and animation all its details.

The castle of Lazienka near Warsaw delighted him quite as much. It had been built by the Turkish prisoners under the Polish king Sobieski. There is a magnificent amphitheatre in the park which can seat 5000 persons. It is built of Carrara marble, with the stage on an island in the middle of a lake, so that the audience are separated from it by a broad piece of water on which boats sail. Its acoustics are excellent notwithstanding, and plays are performed. The most superb effect is that of the ballet when the lights are reflected in the water. The Tzars Nicholas I. and Alexander II. never missed attending a performance when they were at Lazienka, and on one such occasion the Field-Marshal had the opportunity of seeing this wonderful stage.

He was as familiar with the classical architecture of Italy and Greece and with the Oriental architecture of Constantinople and the East as an archæologist. I once told him that I had seen four celebrated cathedrals in one year, Notre Dame, Köln, Freiburg, and Milan, and he drew an interesting parallel between the

most celebrated cathedrals in Europe. He knew them all to the smallest detail, for he had studied them carefully.

. . . . . .

I had the good fortune to make a journey with the Field-Marshal—that is, I was invited to visit Herr von Burt at Dresden when his uncle was there—and we took some little trips together in Saxon Switzerland. Herr von Burt had bought a place at Blasewitz, near Dresden, a considerable property lying on the Elbe, from the garden of which there is a wonderful view of the opposite heights and of the shipping on the river. The fact of Herr von Burt having been the Field-Marshal's adjutant opened the Saxon Court to him and all the best circles of Dresden society, and in his charming home the intellect of that capital met.

He had often written to me about the place, and when I received his invitation I of course set off at once, and to my great delight heard from him, when he met me at the station, that the Field-Marshal was staying with him for a time.

It was a glorious June morning, the garden was fragrant with the smell of flowers, the birds sang in the jasmine, and there was a

continual stream of life on the river. The door on to the balcony opened and the dear old gentleman stepped out, and as he went up to the railings and took a long look at the scene, we stopped involuntarily.

The plan for the next few days was settled. There were to be little journeys to the neighbourhood, whist parties and music in the evenings, from which, of course, the Field-Marshal could not be absent. I recall his amusement at the undiluted dialect and obsequious manners of a retired Saxon lawyer, a Herr von Süssmilch.

The little musical evenings were uncommonly pleasant, and Herr von Süssmilch never failed to be present; but whether he was a judge of the art, I do not know, though I remember that he invariably smiled when the Field-Marshal expressed approval. Herr von Burt sang a good deal, and he had to repeat many things for his uncle. His voice was as fresh as ever, and we spent whole days at our music, Herr von Burt at the piano, I with my violin, and the Field-Marshal played patience.

We made some expedition regularly every morning, and on foot, as the Field-Marshal liked the exercise. Later on we went to Pillnitz by

steamer, and saw the royal park, where the magnificent pleasure-grounds filled him with admiration. We wandered along by the river in the best of spirits to the next village, where we had coffee, and where the Field-Marshal smoked a cigar, an unusual thing for him to do.

He was recognised, however, in spite of his large straw hat, and the news quickly spread that he was there, and soon people were peeping at him from behind the bushes and hedges, but so cautiously that he did not notice them, or his pleasure would have been spoiled.

On the way back Herr von Burt began to speak about his nephew, a cadet who could not make up his mind as to the military profession.

"I am afraid," said the Field-Marshal, "it will fare with him as it did with the Athenian who had to chose between three punishments: either to eat fifty onions, or to receive fifty lashes, or else to pay fifty talents. He tried the onions first, but scarcely succeeded in eating the half of them; then he tried the lashes, but after the first one he cried aloud to heaven that it should cease; and finally, he paid the fifty talents. So the lad will after consideration end by becoming a soldier."

Strangers must often have been surprised at the simplicity of style in which Moltke travelled. Count Moltke-Hvitfeldt gave me a characteristic instance of it. His own taste as to external show was the greatest contrast to the Field-Marshal's. He had been brought up in Paris, and been accustomed to a luxurious life, and at Ovesarum he lived like a Grand Seigneur. His castle, as he described it, was surrounded by a fine old park, and the house with its two towers is like a gentleman's seat of the olden time. The interior is filled with works of art which his cultured taste and untiring energy enabled him to collect. The ceilings and walls have genuine Renaissance panelling, and priceless Gobelin tapestry cover the walls of the hall, beneath a frieze of Delft ware. The rooms contain beautiful old furniture, Holstein, Renaissance, and Louis XIV., and covered with rare Swedish woven material, such as is now only to be found in museums. Added to these are Venetian candelabra, and mirrors, ancient Persian and Meissner china, and old silver-plate. To see it all would require weeks, and a hospitality known only to Sweden is lavished upon its many guests.

The Count told me about his daughter's

engagement, even describing his first impressions of the Field-Marshal, when out walking with me one day.

"I was at the seaside at Marienlyst with my family, you know, near Elsinor, where Hamlet is buried," he said in his lively way. "One day, on returning from a journey to Copenhagen, my wife surprised me with the announcement that two young Prussian officers had called upon her. I started. Two Prussian officers? Mon Dieu, and we were Danes! I calmed down on hearing their names, Herr von Blankenburg and Herr Helmuth von Moltke, a nephew of the Field-Marshal; for though the German Moltkes have not been closely related to us for a century, they are of our family. The gentlemen were introduced to me while we were out walking, and I must confess that I was entirely won over. Young Moltke made a profound impression on me, and I literally fell in love with him. We spent a few happy days together, and both gentlemen came to visit me at Ovesarum. I soon saw how matters were going, and one day Herr von Moltke proposed for my daughter. I gave my consent, provided, of course, that his uncle gave his. There was no need to ask my wife, for from the first she

was more in love with that superb man than I was; and that Liza would not reject this offer of marriage as she had rejected others, that I, of course, knew. The gentleman had not been gone long before Liza received a little note from Berlin. It only contained these words:—

"'Pray expect me on such a day and hour at Ovesarum.

"'Count Moltke, Field-Marshal.'

"You can fancy what an excitement this letter created. That goes without saying, and we made the greatest preparations to receive our celebrated guest in a suitable manner. I frightened my whole household, and awaited the Field-Marshal at the station. There was a crowd of people there. *Sapristi!* how had they got wind of it? But all the world knew that the great Field-Marshal was coming to visit me.

"The train arrived at last. I hastened to the first class, but the Field-Marshal was not there. Astonished, I looked about, and saw the door of a second class open, and an old gentleman in mufti with a small handbag getting out. I recognised him at once. It is he. I hastened towards him with my attendants.

"'Welcome, your Excellency,' I cried.

"The old gentleman raised his hat and gave me his hand.

"'Where is your servant, Excellency?'

"'I have not brought one with me.'

"'And the luggage? May I have your luggage ticket?'

"'I have what I require with me.'

"The blood mounted to my head. What would people think? A Prussian Field-Marshal without a servant, without luggage, and in the 'other class!'

"I only recovered from my surprise when we were seated in the carriage. Then my wife and Liza met us. The Field-Marshal got out and greeted the ladies, a complete cavalier. I was reconciled—he was a Moltke after all."

XII

MOLTKE AND HIS KAISER

THE Field-Marshal was bound to Kaiser Wilhelm I., as everyone knows, not merely as a faithful adviser, but a real friendship existed between the two great men. They had many traits of character in common, and an unlimited respect and high esteem for each other, and they were contemporaries in age. It was all the deeper because the Field-Marshal's tact guided him in his intercourse with the Kaiser.

The old Kaiser took a lively interest in the little domestic peculiarities which entirely claimed his sympathy, such as the Field-Marshal's economy, love of simplicity and moderation, and his unpretentiousness, and his family affection. Moltke, like the Kaiser, used to tear off the unwritten side of a letter and use it for notes, and they both had a disinclination to replace old clothes by new ones.

When Kaiser Wilhelm II. appointed the Field-Marshal his adjutant *à la suite* of the Marine Infantry, a few weeks before his death, Herr Helmuth von Moltke remarked that he would require a new uniform.

"What are you thinking about?" he asked. "I shall not have a new uniform. It is not at all necessary. You can order a white collar and stripes on my tunic."

"And how about the sword, uncle Helmuth?"

"Oh, no one will notice that."

His preparations were made, and he went to Kiel. But the Kaiser did notice the sword, and immediately after receiving him, he unbuckled his own sword and offered it to the Field-Marshal with these words:—

"Excellency, it has not yet been tried, but permit me to offer you my sword."

A few days after this, the Field-Marshal received a sword set with costly stones, as a present from his Majesty. The uniform of the Marine Infantry became him admirably, and he looked ten years younger in it, and he himself liked it so much that he wore it for several days.

The old Kaiser used to watch Moltke in society as a mother watches her daughter at a

ball, and when he saw anyone talking to him, he would go afterwards and ask: "What did he say?"

He was very proud of him whom he used to say he had "discovered," and he never missed an opportunity of drawing him into conversation, or if that was impossible, he would say a few kind words in passing. It was touching, how he sought to find the same trifling weaknesses in him as he had himself.

"It has been a fine day," he whispered one evening, beaming on Moltke. "I have eaten lobster salad three times."

"And Lauer?"[1] asked the Field-Marshal.

"Hush, he is not to know," replied the Kaiser, putting his finger on his lip.

When young Frau Helmuth von Moltke was first presented at Court, the Kaiser said: "I congratulate you. You certainly have got a handsome niece."

"It is high time to beautify our sex," the Field-Marshal answered.

There was a torchlight procession on Prince Bismarck's seventieth birthday, and the Kaiser expressed his desire that a similar honour should

[1] Gustave von Lauer, b. 1807, d. 1889. Kaiser Wilhelm I.'s physician.—Tr.

be shown to the Field-Marshal. This was carried out afterwards by order of Kaiser Wilhelm II., and on Moltke's ninetieth birthday a procession of many thousands marched by the General Staff Department. Although he was, as a rule, no friend to demonstrations, he was much gratified by the enthusiasm on this occasion. He drove with Herr von Burt about Berlin after the procession had passed the house, and was everywhere greeted with stormy applause.

"Had I but lost a battle," he whispered to his adjutant, they would be saying: 'There goes the old donkey.'"

The Field-Marshal often spoke with deep regard of his good Kaiser, and how many expressions have I not heard which convinced me of the warm affection with which he always thought of him. When the news of the loss of the "Great Elector" reached him, his first words were: "Our poor Kaiser."

On learning of Nobiling's attempt on the Kaiser's life, he hastened at once to the Castle, and on his return he sat silent for a long time, and at last murmured to himself in a voice which I cannot forget: "He is wounded."

And I shall also always remember how he

told us at dinner, when he returned from his congratulatory visit to the Kaiser on his eightieth birthday: "The good Kaiser was so much touched, that he embraced and kissed both Bismarck and me."

I only once saw tears in his eyes—when he described the private service held for the Royal Family at the Kaiser's deathbed, all of them being present except Kaiser Friedrich, who was himself lying ill unto death, and how old Kaiserin Auguste had been wheeled into the room in a chair.

The Field-Marshal was in close relations with Kaiser Friedrich, and was his adjutant for years, and attended him to England for his wedding. He went to Charlottenburg immediately after the old Kaiser's death, and the dying Kaiser wrote (he was unable to speak): "I beg you to be careful of yourself, and not to follow the funeral on foot. But if you are disinclined to regard this wish, I command you to do so."

The Field-Marshal returned from this audience deeply moved. I was present that evening, and ventured to ask how he had found Kaiser Friedrich.

"It is incomprehensible how a man's ap-

pearance can be so changed by illness: he is quite another man."

It is still in everyone's recollection how Kaiser Wilhelm II. honoured the faithful adviser of his family. But besides the numerous instances of this known to the public, there are many others known only to the Field-Marshal's nearest relations, and these are by far the most delightful and gratifying. It was a necessity to him to give the old gentleman pleasure at every opportunity. He was invited even to the family celebrations, and he never was absent from the Easter egg hunt at the Castle. In a letter to his nephew Wilhelm, he says:—

"All the children were in the garden of Bellevue Palace yesterday, to hunt for the Easter eggs. The Kaiser was very active in hiding a vast number among the bushes, and the Kaiserin played cat and mouse with the little party, who were treated to chocolate, eggs, bags of bonbons, and flowers, when they left. It is a charming family life. May God preserve it."

Moltke himself also received his Easter egg, one made in the Berlin China Factory, and artistically painted with a picture of one of the royal residences. He always returned in a cheerful mood from these little family festivities,

charmed with the genuine German ways, and with the kindness of the Imperial couple and the excellent manners of the princes, who always shook hands with the old gentleman. He watched with interest the Crown Prince, who seemed to understand about his future position, for he once asked the Kaiser if he too had not also been Crown Prince. The Kaiser said Yes to the question, and the little Prince continued:

"But you have become Kaiser now, and I am Crown Prince."

"For the present you are only a prince, my son," replied the Kaiser.

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FRAU HELMUTH VON MOLTKE.

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XIII

AT CREISAU

I WENT to stay for a few weeks at Ovesarum, in the early part of July, "our polar region," as Frau Helmuth von Moltke jokingly wrote in her kind invitation to me to visit her beautiful home, and while I was there I received the following letter from Herr Helmuth von Moltke, who had only returned to Germany shortly before this:—

CREISAU, 4.7.'83.

DEAR DRESSLER,

If you still intend to come here, I advise you to do so as soon as possible. My uncle Louis and his daughter are only staying for a fortnight, and the Field-Marshal wishes you to be here with him very much.

Auf Wiedersehen.

Yours sincerely,

HELMUTH VON MOLTKE.

It was difficult to leave the beautiful and hospitable house of Count Moltke-Hvitfeldt, but it had always been my desire to see Creisau, which played such an important part in the life of the Field-Marshal, and after this letter I could not delay. I took the next boat which ran from Malmö to Stralsund, and from there, without making any break at Berlin, I went direct to Schweidnitz. I arrived about five o'clock in the morning, and should have had to wait three hours for the train on the branch line to Creisau. But I was impatient, and the wish to go to my dear Field-Marshal as soon as possible induced me to walk when I found that it was only an hour and a quarter distant. I took my bag and set out.

A blue haze lay over the Eulengebirge of Silesia, the fields were rich with ripening corn, and the trees on the roadside were hung with delicious black cherries. The country people whom I met on their way to work, greeted me with the customary words, "Jesus Christ be praised," and a strange mood, half devout, half joyous came over me.

Added to my enjoyment of the lovely fresh scene, was the pleasant prospect of seeing the

Field-Marshal's home, of which I had heard for nearly fifteen years, and now every step took me nearer to it. My pace involuntarily increased till it became a regular presto, and I beheld the roof of the house in the valley as it rose among the trees in the park.

The road wound a little, and that was not to my mind. I was unacquainted with the obstacles, but I decided to strike straight for the place. I had not, however, considered the park wall, which as I saw it from above offered no special hindrance. It was only on arriving in the valley that I found it was fairly high. I had therefore to revive the climbing art of my childhood, and succeeded after throwing my bag over it first. But the park lay deeper, and was so damp with the early dew, that I slipped and came down on my travelling bag, and at the same moment I heard the indignant voice of a workman close by, who tried in purest Silesian to convince me that my unceremonious entry might have cost me a broken neck or leg. I could only understand part of what he said, but I saw from his manner that he had his suspicions of me. I told him, however, that I was going to visit the Field-Marshal, thereupon he at once pulled off his cap, and led

me to the large courtyard beyond which was the house.

Herr Helmuth von Moltke came out just as I was about to ring, the Field-Marshal having seen me from his study window and told the family, who were at breakfast. I had given myself a delightful treat that morning, and to the Field-Marshal some pleasure as well, without knowing it, in that I had elected to walk over, and had brought little luggage, needing neither porter nor carriage, and without having waited for the train on the branch line. After I had seen the younger members of the family and given them the messages from Sweden, I went to see the Field-Marshal, and to my delight, I found him looking his best and in his happiest frame of mind. He asked about my journey, and if I had been shown to my room, and then extending his hand dismissed me to my breakfast, where he soon followed.

It was his greatest pleasure to take his guests about his Tusculum, to which he clung with deep affection.

"If you wish to see Creisau in its greatest beauty, you must come soon," he once wrote to his brother Ludwig. "The foliage is magnificent, not a cockchafer, not a caterpillar

has touched it yet. The meadows are covered with haycocks of the first cutting, and they are to be taken in to-morrow. The red May is in fullest splendour, and the rose bushes have a thousand blossoms; and not one of my brothers is here to whom I can show all this beauty."

We went into the park. It was an unusually fine morning, and nature was rejoicing in the summer air. He stood still by one of the grand old trees, and said:—

"This is a fine beech-tree, is it not?"

"Pardon me, Excellency, but we call it an oak with us."

He had wished to put my knowledge to the proof. In the course of conversation we chanced to mention Liszt, for whom there was no beautiful turf, for he was colour blind, and he had no ear for the song of the nightingale. The Field-Marshal had measured my love of nature by the same standard, but he was evidently pleased when I repelled the aspersion, and declared that I had often derived greater enjoyment from seeing a beautiful tree, than from the society of many people. He became conversational, and showed me some of his favourite haunts with manifest pleasure.

"It is never too late to do a good work," he remarked, leading me to a fine clump of trees. "I began to plant these trees shortly before my seventieth year, and I am now reaping the benefit of them."

He also showed me a fir plantation, which shut out the sight of the railway line. One charming scene succeeded another as we walked about the park, and everywhere the loving tendance of the friend of nature was visible. One special place struck me as particularly beautiful, and I exclaimed:—

"How beautiful this is. How wonderfully one thing enhances the effect of another. Every tree has its own beauty, and stand where one may, there is a delightful picture."

"It has all been done of set purpose, for I laid out all the roads and transplanted many of the trees," he replied.

We approached a fine oak; it was his favourite tree, under which there was a bench and table, and pointing to it, he said:—

"This is my quiet nook, where I like to sit and develop my plans for the garden."

Herr Helmuth von Moltke who had accompanied us thus far, now left to go to the post office, and we wandered on alone. The park

became wilder, and the Field-Marshal explained this, and said:—

"There is still a great deal to be done, and I am by no means finished. If I am spared a few more years, my heirs will find this a beautiful part of the park."

He had during our walk been gathering flowers, which grew in profusion by the pathway, bluebells, cornflowers, crow's foot, marigolds, and some graceful grasses. To save him from bending so much, I picked a few, which he accepted with thanks, but continued gathering more, till we reached a height, when he said with an expressive look:—

"We are coming now to the mausoleum which I built for my wife and myself."

Then I guessed why he had gathered the flowers. We walked slowly up, and after a pause he spoke again:—

"This hill used to be quite bare of everything except for a coarse undergrowth, so I planted these trees. They give a nice shade."

Thus we arrived at the mausoleum, which was of a noble simplicity, and which he intended as his last resting-place. He opened the door and entered, while I with bared head remained standing outside. I saw the dear old gentle-

man lay his little offering on his wife's coffin, which touched me to tears, and then he came and took my arm, leading me a few steps further, saying, as he pointed to the glorious view :—

"Look at that beautiful chain of mountains. I chose this spot, so that even in death it might always be before me."

We descended the slope on the other side, which was rather steep, and wound down to where it formed a horseshoe at the bottom, from which there was a fine view of the mausoleum. It was planted with many fine lime-trees, maples, birches, weeping-willows, and plane-trees. I became enthusiastic, and said :—

"What a great number of fine trees."

"This shall be the resting-place of my successors," he answered.

One can hardly imagine a more suitable spot for a last resting-place than the grassy enclosure set about with its dark firs. The first person to be buried there was his sister-in-law, who then lived at the Mountain Cottage. She died in the spring of 1892, at nearly ninety years of age. On the opposite side of the hill the present owner has presented some acres to the parish of Creisau for a burial-ground, where there is also a chapel. Before that, the parishioners were

buried in the churchyard of Gräditz. The Count has also replaced the massive door of the mausoleum by one in wrought iron, through which the interior can be seen. Hundreds of people from the neighbourhood make a pilgrimage there every Sunday, coming by train, often from great distances, in carriages, or on foot, to place flowers at the threshold. In former times it was called Chrysana, that is, the Christian's place of prayer, and it was one for many pilgrims to come to.

We stopped at a little plantation on our way back, and the Field-Marshal said :—

"Here rests my good old horse. He carried me throughout the war with France. I gave him the bread of charity."

We got home just in time for dinner, after a three hours' walk. After soup, I had a surprise in seeing my host in a new line. He suddenly got a fly-flap and struck at a fly on the chandelier; it escaped, however, but a bit of crystal fell down, while Frau Helmuth anxiously watched the performance. He noticed it, and said with some embarrassment, and shrugging his shoulders as he sat down :—

"Sport."

I often saw him at this sport afterwards, for there were, of course, a great many flies. In the

house he nearly always had a fly-flap in his hand.

The horses were brought round after dinner, and we took a drive, all except Frau von Moltke, who remained at home to see Countess Pückler-Weisstritz.

The General sat on the back seat, and Herr von Moltke and I sat opposite. The people were gathering cherries in a road through which we drove, and the Field-Marshal stopped the carriage and bought some of the fruit and gave them to me. He loved to show such little attentions, and what surprised us both was that he took the trouble to take out his purse, a thing he disliked doing. People have often accused him of excessive economy, but I have witnessed many instances which would prove the contrary. He was thrifty, and avoided useless expenditure when the object was not clear to him. He narrowed down his personal expenses as far as possible, but for what noble reasons is shown in a letter to his brother Ludwig, written in April 1882:—

"You will now be able to have more comfort in your old age than before. I am also going to have more, but it requires some resolution. One

has become so much accustomed to this cursed economy, that it is difficult to give it up. After one has looked after one's belongings, one may then think of self."

He economised himself for the benefit of others, but he was never niggardly. It was unpleasant to him to take his purse out, but once in his hand it was all one to him whether he took out a penny or five pounds. No one deserving of help ever went empty away. I well knew of such instances as the following. When the son of one of his first adjutants became an officer, he presented him with his entire outfit without making any mention of it. He always gave with delight, but not so as to be thanked by the recipient of his bounty.

He showed endless kindness to a man in whose house I lodged. He was a tailor, and Herr von Burt got to know him by coming to me for his singing lessons. He mentioned him to his uncle, who employed him to make August's livery and that of the other servants, and later on obtained employment for him at the Royal Opera House.

Heidemann immortalised himself by an accidental meeting with Kaiser Wilhelm I.

General Moltke gave him an order for a white waistcoat, and this honour upset his equilibrium so much that he ran about the stage like a madman, and not noticing that the order to raise the curtain had been given, he had to rush off at the last moment, and ran straight into the Kaiser's arms, who was talking to the Director at one of the wings. Heidemann turned pale with horror and stood rooted to the spot, till the Kaiser, observing the unhappy man's confusion, said kindly to him :—

"Go on, it does not matter."

The Field-Marshal was much amused when he heard this, and said :—

"If a white waistcoat causes him to overlook his Majesty, what will he do when he gets an order for a suit?"

In his kind sympathy for the concerns of all who came near him, the Field-Marshal often asked after my welfare and my lodgings; and once, when I was moving, he permitted me, at Frau Helmuth von Moltke's kind suggestion, I fancy, to stay at the General Staff Department for a month. On the first morning I was asked if I found my bed comfortable, and I was so bold as to say it was rather too soft. On going

AT CREISAU.

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to bed I found a change, for there was a large tray under the sheet.

I need hardly assure anyone that those four weeks belong to the most delightful of my life, and I shall never forget the way Herr Helmuth von Moltke used to wake me regularly every morning with his :—

"Get out of bed."

The Field-Marshal was very talkative when we were out driving at Creisau. He took a lively interest in the field work as we drove past, and he told me the following anecdote about a pastor in the neighbourhood, who, after the manner of Solomon, thus disposed of a conjugal dispute :—

A peasant's wife went to him one day, and told him that she must leave her husband.

"Why so?" asked the pastor, "you have lived comfortably together till now."

"Yes, Herr Pastor, you see if he had beaten me, that would have shown that he was my husband. But to-day he said 'Subject' to me, which I do not like."

"Yes, yes, that is bad," agreed the pastor, shaking his head. "But I can hardly think he did. Have you not heard amiss? Has he really said 'Subject' and not 'Object,' after all?"

The woman looked at the pastor in a puzzled way, and then at the floor, and pulled at her apron in confusion.

"Look here," continued the pastor, "you have misunderstood him. It was nothing."

"Then I need not leave him, but may return home?" cried the woman.

"Certainly you may. Yes, if he had said 'subject' to you, that would of course be a ground for separation. But 'object' means nothing."

We heard the bells of a neighbouring church on our way back, ushering in the Sunday.

"What a wonderful tone those bells have," I said.

"Yes, they are made of good metal," replied the Field-Marshal, glad that I liked them.

"After the war with France, the Kaiser gave me five French guns, and I had these bells cast from three of them."

We listened to them in silence. A soft haze hung over the fields. The field-labourers remained standing respectfully as we drove by, and the Field-Marshal called out "Good evening" to them. They answered it in a chorus, and it was plain that they regarded their "Great

General," as they called him, with pride and affection.

We found Countess Pückler on our return, and after supper we had some music. Herr Helmuth von Moltke, who had continued having lessons from Professor Hausmann, played Mozart's Larghetto, and other things, and I accompanied him on the piano.

Count Pückler arrived in time for supper, and the conversation was very lively, and touched upon many subjects. The Count mentioned having seen on a tombstone at Koblenz that a woman had had twenty-one sons, and that all had been present at her funeral. Upon which the Field-Marshal remarked that very unusual things did occur, and that a Countess Moltke in Denmark had given birth to four sons at one time.

He related various little anecdotes, and among them the following conversation with a Roman Countess who was a fervent admirer of Wagner, and when he differed from her, she exclaimed: "What will you? We Wagnerians are like drunkards. They know they must go to destruction, yet they drink all the same."

The talk turned upon art, and the Countess asked the Field-Marshal how the bust which

Reinhold Begas, the sculptor, had made of him, pleased him.

"He has made it frightfully like me," he answered.

The guests left soon after nine, and the master of the house, who rose earlier at Creisau, also retired. The first unforgettably beautiful day at Creisau was over.

. . . . . .

While we were at breakfast the next morning, towards nine o'clock, the General returned from a long walk in the park. He was in very good spirits, praised the fine weather, and said he had discovered a quail's nest.

"There were five young ones in it," he said, "and if the children go to it, they will leave their nest at once, as they do when a human hand has touched it."

Then he asked me if I would go to church with him. I thanked him, and accepted, and after he had changed his grey coat for a black one we went. The half-hour's walk led through the park to the high road, and the old gentleman walked it every Sunday in good weather or bad, for he remained a good walker to the last. He walked to Schweidnitz sometimes, a walk of an hour and a half. We met a peasant woman

carrying a little child, and leading a little boy. When she saw the Field-Marshal she stopped, and said to the boy :—

"See, there is the good uncle who gave you the new suit, and the savings box."

I learnt afterwards that the savings boxes were a regular institution at Creisau. He gave all the children a money-box, with a mark in it, as an inducement to them to save their money, and as soon as they had saved one mark, he gave them a second. He established a children's garden, where the little ones could play under the care of a deaconess, while their parents were at work in the fields, and he delighted in their doings. The children's festival was held while I was at Creisau. He took a great interest in the well-being of the people, and even when in France the pastor or inspector had to inform him of every detail concerning the people, and he always found time to advise and help where help was needed.

The church at Gräditz was quite full when we entered, and everyone rose, and sat down only after the General had taken his seat. A silver plate with an inscription now marks the place where he used to sit.

The sermon was short, and adapted to the

congregation, and after service the Field-Marshal chatted a while with the pastor, and then we walked home. On the way back we found a young tree which was bent down, and he carefully examined it and tried to fasten it upright with his handkerchief, but not succeeding, he said:—

"I must come early to-morrow and put up something to support it."

I ventured to suggest that the gardener might do it, but this he declined with decision, and added that he thought the tree might be saved, as it had a living fibre in it, but he must see to it himself. After dinner I saw him look out a suitable support from the greenhouse store-room, and next morning towards eight o'clock, when I asked to go with him to watch how the operation was performed, he laughed at me, and replied:—

"The tree? It was attended to long ago."

While the rest of us were still in bed, he had gone to the patient on the high road, and he did not omit going to look after it for some days, taking the short cut to the place. Just as in conversation he found the briefest way to express himself, so he had an instinct for finding out the shortest road. The people still say,

when asked to show a short cut anywhere: "Go there, that is the way the old gentleman used to take."

We had music again in the evening, and Frau von Moltke and her daughter came over from the Mountain Cottage.

Herr Helmuth von Moltke had taken me to call on his mother the day before. The little house is about twenty minutes from the Castle, and is situated high up on the edge of the forest, surrounded by a carefully tended garden. It is a treasure without and within. The two ladies were so comfortably settled that one felt at home directly one crossed the threshold. The rooms were furnished with beautiful old furniture of the time of Queen Louise, and valuable family pictures were on the walls. The hangings and covers were of their own work.

There was a venerable piano in the drawing-room, and Frau von Moltke asked me to try it. It was an instrument of the beginning of the nineteenth century, and must have been a superb one in its day, and it still sounded soft and melodious. Mozart would have delighted in it, and for that reason I played his Rondo in A minor, and I was surprised at the effect. The Mozart music and the instrument harmonised so

wonderfully together, and in a way which can never be the case with a modern piano, that I could not but think how very much the effect of a piece depends upon its means of expression. On our present-day pianos we only enjoy a translation of Mozart, so to speak.

The old lady soon saw how much the instrument interested me, and as nothing could give her greater pleasure, I sat there playing Mozart for an hour to her.

I told the Field-Marshal about it on our return, and begged him to arrange to have a little Mozart concert there, to which he assented, for he understood my enthusiasm.

The plan was carried out within the next few days, and Frau von Moltke had on that occasion the special pleasure of hearing her son's beautiful playing in her own home.

We were rather late in driving home after this little family concert. The Field-Marshal called our attention to the bright starlight night, and said :—

"The Great Bear stands directly over Scotland about this time of the year," and of course we all looked upward, including August, the coachman, who as a rule only looked at his horses, but who drank in every word his master uttered.

NORTH SIDE OF THE CHATEAU.

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He could not resist joining open-mouthed in the general upward gaze at the beast which had been mentioned. But he was soon recalled from this pastime by his master's voice :—

"Pay attention to the horses, August, and don't drive us into a ditch."

Thus admonished, August seldom turned his head more rapidly towards his horses than at that moment.

. . . . . .

The next free timeI had I devoted to seeing over the house. It was a rather large, tasteless house compared with the great building which the present owner has erected. The Peile, a little branch of the Weistritz, runs at the back of it, and sometimes it flooded so much that the family were driven back to town earlier than they wished to go. The great courtyard, round which were the stables, was separated from the château by a hedge adorned with a bust of Kaiser Wilhelm I. The exit led over a little parapet into the entrance hall. Two great French guns stood in front. The Field-Marshal's rooms were on the left, and those of the younger members of the family were on the right. A bronze statue of Kaiser Wilhelm I., standing on a granite pedestal, was in front of the

broad steps which led to the first floor. The reception rooms ranged round the large central hall were used at that time as a kind of museum, where all manner of costly presents which the Field-Marshal had received in the course of his long life were arranged. There were superb bronzes, pictures, and porcelain, gifts from the Royal Family and the King of Saxony, and a fine marble bust of Victor Emmanuel, which he had presented to the Field-Marshal when he was in attendance on Kaiser Wilhelm I. in Italy. There were diplomas, addresses, and letters, and a display of magnificent works. The large carpet which the Moltke family had had woven at Schmiedeberg for his ninetieth birthday, was spread out here later on.

The rooms which he occupied himself have been left just as he used them—a large study and a small bedroom. The study windows overlooked the courtyard, and the other window on to the park and the road beyond. It was high and light, and uncommonly comfortable, but furnished with great simplicity. The furniture of the bedroom was only what was necessary. In the shade of the grand old trees, in front of the window, was a dovecot, and the Field-Marshal busied himself with the

MOLTKE'S STUDY AT CREISAU.

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pigeons every morning. He used to like to hear the birds sing in the morning, and was tempted sometimes to stay in bed a little longer when there was a particularly fine singer. He knew the ways of birds well, and they were carefully protected in the park. He went to the window as soon as he was up, examined the state of the weather, looked at the trees, and talked to the pigeons, which fluttered about with happy voices.

The Berliners could often observe the venerable General's great love of birds, for on a winter's day, when the snow lay heavily on the ground, he was sometimes seen on the balcony feeding them. They knew him, and would come to the window and beat on it with their bills, if he kept them waiting.

He did not keep dogs, till Count von Waldersee gave him a teckel in his later years. It played an important *rôle* in the house, and was always taken with the family to Creisau. Wherever the Field-Marshal was, there also was the teckel. He was the children's special companion, and played the wildest tricks with them, while his master looked on laughing, taking a great pleasure in the pranks of the little animal.

The Field-Marshal took an early walk every morning in the park, where he always found something to do; and so eager was he to go out, that he often did so before he had his tea. He took his garden scissors, letting no dead branch escape him, even reaching up to the higher ones with the scissors fastened to a stick, and in this way he forgot himself and the rest of the world, and his breakfast, of course, till Frau Helmuth von Moltke had to give him a little lecture on several occasions: "Oh, uncle Helmuth, you went out again to-day without eating any breakfast." He listened to her patiently, but was no better the next morning. He disappeared immediately after breakfast, going either in the park or to the fields, when I often had the pleasure of going with him. It was astonishing how much he was refreshed and rejuvenated by this life. He would raise the large branches and drag them out of the way, or push a bench straight, or lift a heavy garden table from one place to another. He was the best worker at Creisau. One day he chanced to be out walking with his nephew, Herr Fritz von Moltke, when he was eighty-nine years of age, and he came to a ditch which obliged him to take a

longer way, he was annoyed with himself, and said :—

"See, Fritz, I cannot jump over the ditch any longer."

He was more reluctant to accept invitations at Creisau than in Berlin, and would only accompany the family occasionally, to please his niece, or drive to Herr von Websky's, his nearest neighbour, for a rubber of whist. I never saw him play whist at home during the three weeks of my stay. Even this pleasant pastime was in abeyance in his love of nature. We often went out driving, and each time we drove in a different direction. We went to the little town of Reichenbach, near which was one of the celebrated parks in that part of the country, and which he looked over with interest. One of his favourite drives was to a place where a monument had been erected to those who had fallen in the war, and where there was a fine view of the valley of the Weistritz. My good host, in his unfailing kindness, took me everywhere with him, even to a large dinner which he could not decline. On that occasion I saw him for the first and only time in a dress coat, on which he wore the St John's Cross.

The three weeks passed more rapidly than I

desired, but my pupils awaited my return, and I was obliged to leave. On the last evening, I went into his room to thank him for all the kindness he had shown me, and begged him to let me say good-bye to him the next morning.

"What train are you taking?"

"The one leaving at ten o'clock, Excellency."

"Good," was all he said.

The next morning he surprised me by saying that he had something to attend to at Schweidnitz, and would take me with him and put me down at the station.

So even in leaving Criesau a delightful memory was granted to me.

XIV

THE NINETIETH BIRTHDAY

THE Field-Marshal would always get away from any ovation, and travel on his birthday, but he spent his ninetieth birthday in Berlin at the express desire of the Kaiser.

In *The Collected Writings and Memorials* there is a full account of all the honours which were paid to him by the Kaiser and the Royal Family, and by the various German princes, as well as by the whole nation, independent of parties, and this will be still fresh in all minds.

I shall set down only a few personal recollections.

I went to the General Staff Department about six o'clock, and found the family still at coffee. The Field-Marshal had not withdrawn as usual, but was having an animated conversation with Lenbach, the only other guest. I took my old gentleman my customary little offering, a

small bunch of violets, which he accepted with kind thanks. He looked so well and was so cheerful, I could not resist expressing my pleasure.

He mentioned hearing of a man who had taken the trouble to reckon up how often in the ninety years his birth had fallen on the same day, and said that this one would be the thirteenth time.

"If I were a pessimist——" he added, but was interrupted by the announcement that the Berlin Singing Club had arrived.

They celebrated the jubilee in the beautifully decorated hall. The surprise pleased him very much, and as he gave me the programme he called my attention to the selection of pieces.

I had the honour of standing near the family at the torchlight procession in the evening, so I know from my own observation how deeply touched he was.

"It was really beautiful," he said as we went in.

Tea was served in the conference room, where the Christmas festivities were celebrated, and where, as on that day, the many presents were displayed. On seeing me looking at them, he called me and began talking about the various

gifts. He showed me an album with pictures of Kaiser Wilhelm I.'s palace, and said that the old Kaiser once observed to him as they stood together in the historical corner window watching the crowd which always assembled there to see him :—

"When I first came to live in this house, no one ever stood down there."

Suddenly he put the album aside, and asked :—

"Won't you play something?"

I looked at him in surprise, almost fancying I had misunderstood him. Could he possibly desire to hear any music after all the events of the day? But I was delighted that he did wish it. He went into the music-room before me, and while I opened the piano he stood by a table and looked at a lamp which always had an attraction for him, for whenever it was brought in he used to stand before it with folded arms lost in thought. The lamp had a bell which represented a globe. This evening was no exception, notwithstanding the many events of the day.

Then the old gentleman of ninety sat down in the corner of the sofa, and listened to the music, just as if nothing unusual had been taking

place. I improvised a few popular airs,[1] because I knew he liked them best, ending with a polonaise by Prince Oginski.

He was particularly fond of it, whether on account of its simplicity, and because it reminded him of Mozart's chaste melodies, or because he sympathised with the tragic death of the unfortunate young prince, I do not know. The cuckoo clock in the next room struck twelve, and the Field-Marshal rose to go to bed.

I hurried home and began, while the impressions of the day were still fresh, to compose a musical setting for them. I had it printed at once and gave it to the Field-Marshal a few days after. He was visibly pleased, and called the family, saying:—

"See, Dressler has set the Torchlight Procession to music," and he asked me to play it to him once, twice, and not less than five times that evening.

[1] German Volkslieder.—Tr.

XV

THE LAST MELODY

I WAS at a dinner-party at Frau von Schmeling's, in celebration of her seventy-second birthday, when, towards the end of dinner, it must have been about five o'clock, a sudden feeling of disquiet came over me, which I could not account for to myself. I was sitting next to Fräulein von Kirchmann, the daughter of the well-known philosopher and authority on law, and she noticed it. As she was an old friend of the family, I asked her if it would be possible for me to leave immediately after dinner. She said, yes, though I was unable to explain to her the anxiety which oppressed me. Frau von Schmeling asked me, when I took leave of her:—

"What are you going to do?"

And it was only at that moment that my uneasiness became clear to myself, and I replied that I had to go to the Field-Marshal.

I hurried home to change my things, but was

detained there by an old friend, who wished to take me with him to the opera.

"Excuse me, but I must go to Field-Marshal Moltke," I said.

"Are you expected?"

"No."

"Well, then, you might go to him to-morrow."

"That is impossible, I must go to him to-day."

He tried to talk me over, but I took my departure and drove to the General Staff Department. An indefinable feeling called me there, a feeling I had never felt before, and for which I could give no good reason. I only felt that I must go there, and that nothing in the world could have kept me away.

I found everything as usual when I arrived. Herr Helmuth von Moltke received me, and I asked him if he would like to have some music, and while he was tuning up his violoncello I would just go and see the Field-Marshal. I knocked at his door, and heard his kind voice call out as usual, "Come in." I found him sitting in his armchair under the hanging lamp, with his back to the window, reading a newspaper.

He looked up as I wished him good evening, and his eyes struck me as beautiful, with an unearthly expression which greatly touched me. He was calm, and told me that he had just read that the Kaiser was prevented from shooting blackcock at the Wartburg on account of several degrees of frost. He had never experienced such cold at the end of April. I told him that Herr Helmuth von Moltke and I were going to play Chopin's violoncello sonata for the first time, and left the room.

Herr von Moltke was waiting for me, not in the music-room, but in the large hall, where the piano had been moved for some reason or other. We began to practice, and got so much absorbed that we did not notice that the Field-Marshal came in and sat down and then went out again. We only knew it when he told us at tea.

"I have been in listening several times," he said.

We fell into conversation about compositions —he asked me to sit by him—and I said that Chopin had composed this glorious sonata while he was still unknown. An animated conversation took place with Captain Count von Schlippenbach, in which the Field-Marshal was

interested. The Court Theatre was mentioned, and the Count said he had thought of going yesterday, but the same piece was always given now. Conversation next turned upon the North Sea Canal, and of Moltke's last visit to Kiel on his appointment to the Marine Infantry. He was rather animated on this subject, and expressed without reserve his views concerning the canal and its political and strategical importance to the empire. After the Count had gone they sat down to whist, not as usual in the tea-room, but in the silver-room, where we had had tea.

They began to play about nine o'clock, and when they were so late sitting down to cards, I generally went away, but I stayed this evening. Why? I cannot say, for the anxiety which had taken hold of me had passed off after I had seen how well the old gentleman was. I went into the tea-room and talked with Frau Marcher, an old Swedish friend of Frau Helmuth von Moltke, who was on a visit. She was doing some fancy work, and Herr Marcher was playing whist.

The door of the silver-room stood open, and the lively voices of the players could be heard. I went in several times to see how

the game was going on. Frau Helmuth von Moltke pointed each time to her uncle, and when a particularly gay laugh attracted me in, I learned that he had made the "Grand Slam," and I saw him smiling and chuckling as he tapped the edge of the table with his fingers, and looking mischievously at his niece, as much as to say that he had "given it to her well."

The game went on again, and we returned to our places, but had scarcely done so and begun to talk, before I heard Frau Helmuth von Moltke call me. I got up at once and hurried to her, but stopped as if rooted to the spot.

My beloved Field-Marshal had sunk back in his chair, and with hands folded before him was struggling for breath. His niece sat opposite to him, where she had sat while playing, and with difficulty concealed her anxiety. Herr von Moltke and Herr Marcher were not in the room.

"Won't you play something?" she asked. "We interrupted the game because my uncle feels rather asthmatic. My husband has gone to the hall to put things straight."

I sat down at the piano, but I did so mechanically, for my thoughts were with the

Field-Marshal. It was dreadful to see him suffering. How often I had seen him quite well at play. Even when he was really not well enough to go into the music-room, I had had the small piano rolled into his study, and played to him there every day till he was again well. Now for the first time my faith in the power of music was shaken. I felt that this time I should not play him again to health.

At this moment the dear old gentleman walked into the hall. Frau von Moltke had suggested to him to listen from his place in the silver-room, and she told me afterwards that he had said:—

"I must go in if he is going play for me."

He went without assistance, and as upright as usual, holding his red silk handkerchief in his hand, and sat down on a chair by the piano.

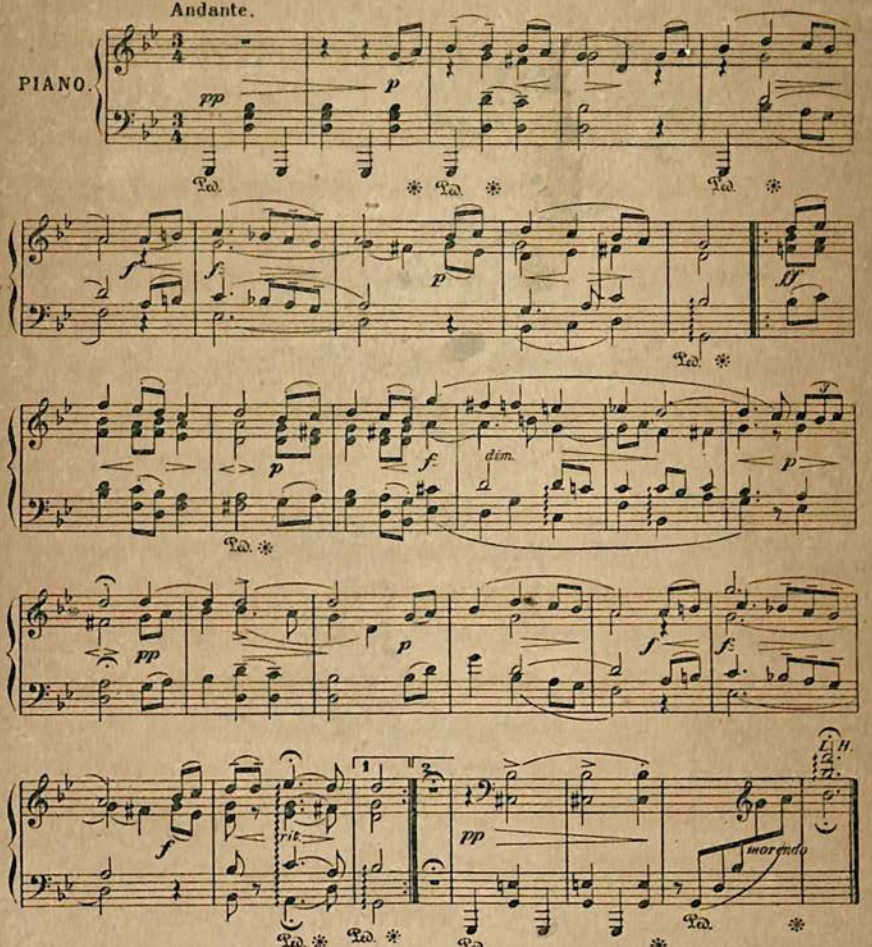
"What music shall I give you?" Herr von Moltke asked me.

"I cannot play from any to-night," I said. "I will try to improvise."

I glanced again at the dear old gentleman, and then began with a few soft chords, and from

Die letzte Melodie

componirt von

Friedrich August Dressler.

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this a melody unfolded itself. My heart was heavy within me at this moment, little as I dreamed that this would be the last time he would ever listen to me.

I was just about to stop playing when I noticed that the Field-Marshal slowly got up and with bent carriage left the room. I stopped and went towards Herr Helmuth von Moltke, who was alone in the room with me, and who was watching his uncle but did not like to follow him immediately, knowing that he disliked people making themselves anxious about him.

I wanted to ask him if his uncle had lately suffered from similar attacks, when we suddenly heard a deep and painful sigh from the next room. Herr von Moltke sprang up and hurrying in called me at once. I followed as fast as I could, and found him holding the Field-Marshal, who had sunk down on the chair just as he seemed about to rise from it.

"Help me, and call my wife," he cried out to me.

I rushed to bring her, but she was already on the threshold. His head sank back and a deathly paleness spread over his face, just as she

was going to him. Herr Marcher came in, and with his help the dying man was carried into his bedroom.

I remained back, incapable of moving. I was overpowered by an unutterable sorrow which deprived me of strength. Herr Marcher cried out immediately:

"The Field-Marshal is dead."

Scarcely ten minutes had passed from the moment that I had gone in to see what the merriment was about till now.

I pulled myself together and went into the chamber of death. There he lay on his bed asleep, or dead? I could not have said. But I felt that he was torn out of my life, he whom, next to God, I loved most.

. . . . . .

Is it possible that between us and those who fill a great place in our lives an inexplicable connection can exist, even though we be separated?

What drove me to the Field-Marshal that day?

Why do I see him frequently in my dreams and waking hours now, so distinctly that I feel as if I could touch him with my hand?

Why do I still feel his moral influence so

strongly that it would be impossible for me to do anything that I knew he disapproved?

I cannot answer these questions, but the thought of seeing him again gives me strength to live and to die.

THE END.

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PRINTED BY
OLIVER AND BOYD
EDINBURGH

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on 15 October, 2018